

A

Issue 15 ★ October/November 1996 ★ Two Dollars American



PUNK PLANET

PATRIOT GAMES: PP COVERS THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTIONS



Action Girl Comics ★ Rhythm Collision ★ Chamberlain
 Cheesecake ★ Columns ★ Reviews ★ Mucho Moré

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general correspondance can be sent via **e-mail** at:

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Ads not reserved will get in,
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after deadline may run in
the following issue. Those
are the risks... Are you the
gambling type?

no major label ads. **Fuck you!**

all ads are due December 10th
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DAN SINKER

*Day to day maintenance, planeteer
recruiter, money guy, distribution boy,
layout maker, almost comatose*

JULIA COLE

Vacationeer

ERIC ACTION

Zine & Record collector

JOSH HOOTEN

Layout Maker

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THE INTRO

Something Wicked This Way Comes...

One always has to wonder which month is scarier, October or November.

October has ghosts and goblins, witches and grinning pumpkins. October sees the trees turn from green things of life to spindly, wiry things of death. And of course, October has kids dressed up like leper colonists running from door to door demanding candy that isn't laced with cyanide or filled with staples.

But November... November has fat politicians pumping hands and kissing babies in a last ditch attempt to pretend to be one of us. The November air is full of false promises and broken dreams. And of course, November sees people that should know better plugging their noses and covering their eyes and walking into a smelly gymnasium to cast their vote for the evil of two lessers.

There's really no contest, eh?

It's due to the bewitched month of November that we decided to crawl out of the punk rock cave and take a look at the current state of politics in the US. What better way to do that than to go straight to the source: the Democratic & Republican National Conventions. Not only do you get to keep an eye on the mainstream parties but you get a pretty good picture of what the alternatives are up to. And so we sent people to both Conventions (even managing to obtain press passes for the DNC), the results of their observations can be found in a special 20 page section smack dab in the middle of this here magazine.

But don't think all the regular stuff ain't in here. You've got all the columns, interviews, reviews, and all the rest that you could want in an issue, plus a whole lotta ads!

So sit back, watch the leaves fall off the trees, keep your eyes peeled for shady politicians trying to sell you down the river and enjoy the new issue of Punk Planet.

As always, if you don't like PP, we urge you to make your own zine... In fact, you should be making your own zine anyway!

See you in the winter,

Your friends at PP

HEY RACE FANS:

here's the deal: we're downright reliant on your submissions to keep our 'zine well fueled and ready to power on. So get that writing engine revved & read these guidelines:

Interviews

We like all kinds of interviews, with all kinds of people. Just 'cause someone's not in a band (or may not even be 'punk') doesn't mean they're not interesting. Above all else, make the interview interesting. An interesting interview with someone no one's ever heard of is going to run over a really boring interview with Rancid.

Fiction

We usually print one piece of fiction per issue, so sometimes there's a wait before you see yours printed. It can't be too long either... There's a thing called 'short stories' go for it.

Articles

Articles are the best! They're also the hardest to write, but you can do it! Articles are researched, well written, and goddamnit, relevant! Take a chance, do something wild!

DIY

You can always help us out by writing up a DIY file. Basically, if you know how to do something & can explain it well, type it on up & send it in. DIY files have ranged from auto maintenance, to touring, to guitar buying, and all points in between.

Comics

Comics are good, but we're looking for people that would be willing to take a stab at a regular strip. To be honest, we're pretty picky.

Everything else

As far as reviews & columns go: we don't need anymore!! We have a ton of columnists & more reviewers than can fit in a mid-sized apartment! Please, don't send us columns, as you're pretty much assured they won't run.

All submissions should be typed, and preferably put on a 3 1/2" disk, either Mac or IBM. Just 'cause you send something in doesn't mean it's going to get printed, yo.

SUBMISSION INFO

A couple people have asked me how come I never seem to run ads in *Punk Planet* anymore... Could it be a result of my simmering feud with their house cartoonist? A desire to distance myself from the zine turf of Lorenzo Livermore (the bloke affiliated with that little label in the bay area that still occasionally does records with the same kinda sound as Mutant Pop)? A form of brazen economic protest over the dramatic drop of really bad fiction allowed to make print in *PP*?

Nothing so romantic... The real reason I haven't had an ad in this here zine for a dog's year is THE AD DEADLINE IS REALLY INCONVENIENT. What's with that two-month lead time anyhow?

So here I am, by the grace of Dan, and I'm once again gonna try and sell you a few records. You send me the bucks, I pile them up and use them to make more records. The more you buy, the more I make... Over time we put a pile of really rippin' stuff into the world...

My mission statement: I'm gonna be perusing the country for the coolest and best up-and-coming pop-punk bands, gonna put 'em in a decent studio, gonna make a good record. Nothing more, nothing less. I spend shitloads on each release, nice vinyl, nice sleeves. I keep prices down so you can afford to check out a few bands without missing lunch...

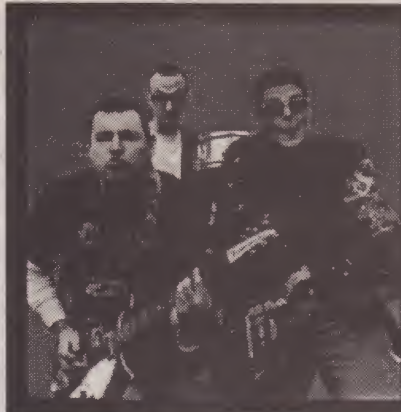
What I'm NOT gonna be doing is chasing around "big" bands, the goliaths of the industry, and trying to scam throwaway tracks from them. Even though it would be 500 times easier and more profitable to go that route, I would much rather "break in" a fairly high percentage of new and newish bands—groups that are still enthusiastic and energetic. The main thing I'm looking for is a somewhat distinctive "sound." Mutant Pop Records do NOT all sound alike, even though I believe it's safe to say I'm one of the most tightly focused labels out there...

While most of my singles are "one off" projects, there are a few bands that can be legitimately said to be "on" the label: After School Special, The Automatics, The Connie Dungs, Underhand... I will be doing a series of full-length releases for these bands, CD format only for the time being... Hopefully I'll make enough CDs go away that the bands will be able to make a few bucks at it, see the world, fulfill whatever vision it is they are trying to fulfill. Go, cats, go!

Mutant Pop full lengths will rock as hard as the singles, only longer.

Well, I'm to the bottom of the page, which means I should shut the fuck up. Thank you for your support!

T. Chandler



AUTOMATICS

self-titled compact disc — \$10 ppd.

One band, three idiots, seventeen songs... Portland's pop-puke kings are coming to your house with their buzzsaw guitars. Gonna rip it up, yes they are. All the hits and more, bucko, "She Likes Girls," "Do The Fish," "My Life is Shit," stuff like that... One of the best albums of the year, good production, harmonies and everything!

NEW RELEASES

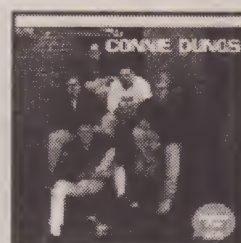
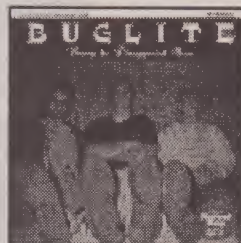
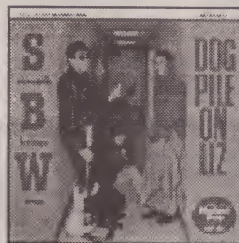
\$3
postpaid!

MP-14 UNDERHAND "Connections" EP —

Four more killer cuts from Arne, Christian, and Matt. This is the third Underhand record and continues the band's tradition of fantastic hooks and intelligent lyrics.

MP-12 MORAL CRUX "Victim of Hype" EP —

Even though this band has been at it since the late '80s, you've never heard this Moral Crux. GREAT production!!! Very catchy songwriting, too. Their best EP ever!



MP-13 THE AUTOMATICS "Ten Golden Greats" EP *Amazing 10 song EP!*

MP-11 BUGLITE "Sorry to Disappoint You" EP *Smooth Pennsylvania pop*

MP-10 JON COUGAR CON. CAMP "Victoria's Secret Sauce" EP *Their best!*

MP-09 SCRATCH BONGOWAX "Dogpile on Liz" EP *Goofy, garagey, good!*

MP-08 THE CONNIE DUNGS "I Hate This Town!" EP *Snot-pop classic*

MP-07 UNDERHAND "Under A Glass" EP *Hüsker Dü-influenced power band*

MP-06 EVERREADY "County Transit System" EP *Incredibly catchy stuff!*

MP-05 THE AUTOMATICS "All The Kids..." EP *Original demophonic debut!!!*

MP-04 STINK "I Don't Want..." 7" *New album out on Allied—Check 'em out!*

MP-03 BORIS THE SPRINKLER "D&M" EP *is temporarily out of print...*

MP-02 ROUND NINE self-titled EP *East-Bay flavored punk rock. Great record...*

MP-01 UNDERHAND "Desire" EP *Where it all began. Totally new sleeve here.*

MP-703 THE PULLOUTS "A Lot of Power Tool..." EP *Megafast Hyperpop!*

MP-702 JON COUGAR CON. CAMP "Punk Explosion!" EP *Raw but catchy*

MP-701 EVERREADY "Kalifornia" EP *Fans realize this is Brian's best EP*

Also please order AFTER SCHOOL SPECIAL "The Existentialist Blues" EP if you wanna hear the catchiest, coolest, best pop-punk record of 1996...

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posterchild: drew of the sleepytime trio

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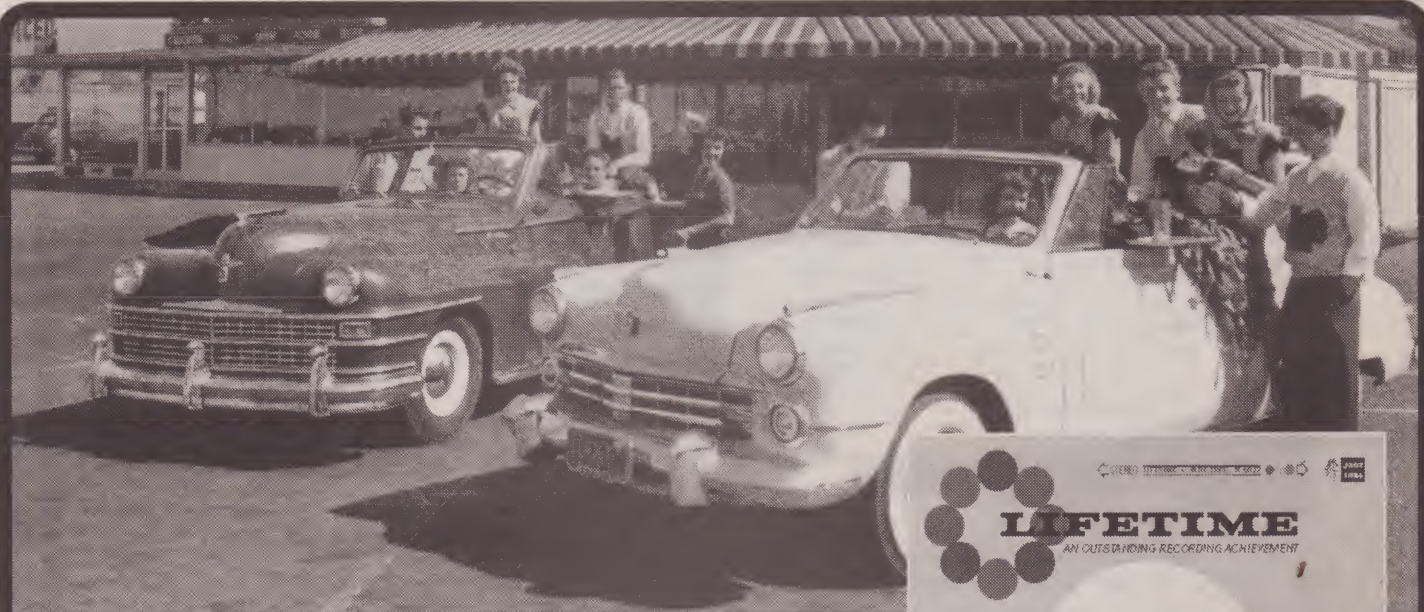


THE PROMISE RING LP/CD JT 1026

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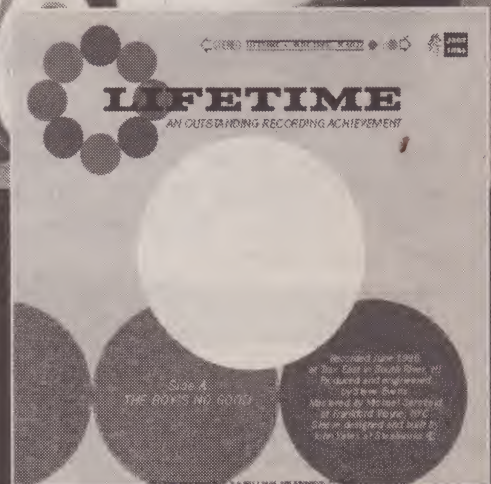


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Ox/dEALERS LP

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Simpletons ep, Montgomery Burns ep
Simpletons/M. Burns ep, Plutocracy cd
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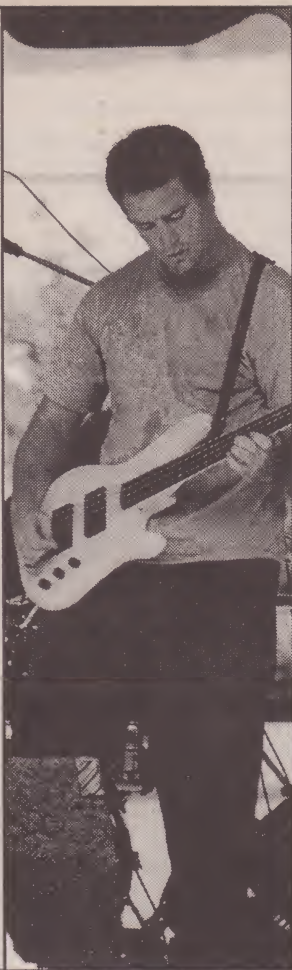
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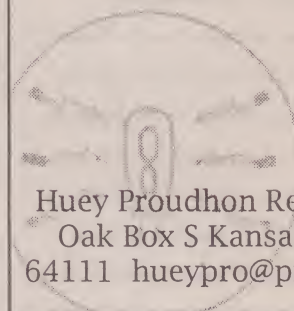
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the get up kids



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EVERREADY

"All Time Low"



IDY003 - EVERREADY - NEW 3-SONG 7", 3 BRAND SPANKIN' NEW DITTYS.

Dear Fuck Planet...

After enduring Josh Hooten's fucking stupidity and biting sarcasm column after column in PP, now I'm gonna get my chance to set the record straight on a few things, especially after that kid Carlos's letter last issue and all the internet nonsense that went on.

First off, Josh Hooten and I do not like another. Fine. He's a smarmy ass who plays with a Mac all day, and now tries to teach his brain-damaged dog tricks. Good luck, buddy!

Second, Johnny T (who works at Change Zine) lives in Boston, and we went to see the Sonics play the Celtics. Well, we ended up not being allowed in the game, so we decided to go vent our anger at Mr. Hooten who lived not far away. Everyone in HC/punk would like to think they are so bold, so we'd confront Hooten about all the shit he's talked about me. He was not at his place, so Johnny T climbed the fire escape and we got inside his place. At first we were going to fucking destroy the place but we're not the Cro-Mags, so I just wrote a note. On the way out, his yellow lab puppy was shitting on the floor, so I kicked, harmlessly, and it hit its head and acted funny. Then we left.

Third, at the Ten Yard Fight show in CT, Johnny T was not even there. I was there with Pat Outside, who also helps with Change Zine. Yes, I did get confrontational when Josh & Tony (also from Commodity) starting fighting with the crowd. I did not hit him with a tire iron from the back- I hit him with a hard stick from the side. I don't know what Pat Outside did. Ask him.

Fourth, I think Hooten is telling people that the fight was a stunt so that he doesn't have to confront me. Unlike Danny Ainge, Hooten can't hide behind his friends when I attack him with Brickowski-like ferocity. But, yes, that issue where I interviewed the

Commodity guys did sell well & continues to do so. He sees it as a publicity stunt to sell more copies of Change Zine #7 where he's interviewed (there are some, only \$2 ppd, though I don't condone buying it).

This weekend Ten Yard Fight plays CT again and I expect Hooten & Tony to be there, ready with the Boston crew to act out a scene from the Outsiders. All I can guarantee is that the show won't be boring like 90% of shows I see these days. Everyone in punk/HC try to seem so crazy, anti-authoritative, and ready to fight for their cause. Bullshit. The only people fighting or struggling are a bunch of dumbfuck jocks at SxE shows who usually back down when in the face of a real threat (ask Earth Crisis about their NJ show with w/Floorpunch). For the record, I hate kick boxing, vegan, baggy-pants white boys. But I'll still destroy the commodity boys without thought.

You can sit on the sidelines all you like, but when I'm in the game, I don't come out. For anybody!

XXX

Patrick West
Change Zine

Punk Planet,

I'd like to personally thank Matt Reed and Nate Everett for letting me know what my moral obligations are. It's good to know someone's around to make that decision for me since I am obviously unable to make moral choices for my self. So the rest of this is addressed to them.

I can't hope to change your minds, but I'll try to show some undecided readers that propaganda can go both ways.

It's been sometime since I took the course, but in my intro to psychology class, my teacher (a vegan) told us about an experiment done at Berkeley in 1969. I realize there could be some question as to the validity of such a place at such a time, but all I can do here is retell the tale as

best I can remember it. Plants in a greenhouse were hooked up to monitors of some sort and left alone. A man entered the room in a manner described as "violently", walked over to one plant, "violently" ripped it up from the roots, "violently" threw it to the floor, "violently" stomped on it, then "violently" stormed out of the room. The following day, the man merely entered the room and the plants shook. Is this perhaps an "automatic" reaction? Is it not an "automatic" reaction for a cat to squirm and scratch it's way out of my grip? Is it not perhaps more "automatic" for the unconditioned cat to squirm than for the plants to react only after trauma?

There are so many ways to continue with this letter and this sentence serves as a poor excuse as to why my attention shifts are not smooth.

Back to morality. "This inherent value is based on the fact that they are not only alive (like a plant), but have a life, independent of whether or not anyone else finds it useful." "We only have a moral obligation to respect creatures that can feel and have interests - plants do not have interests or desires." And you think I'm anthropocentric? In these statements you are implying to me that it is in non-human animals similitude to human animals that we find the necessity to respect them. Why isn't life important if it doesn't know it's alive? Perhaps it is because you cannot relate to that. I interpreted Cahr's original statement as this: You are being animalcentric in not associating yourself with plants, protists, fungi and monera, and rationalizing that with your pain-based moralities.

"their destructive anthropocentric view sees animals as a means instead of an end, that is they only have value in what they are worth to humans." Would you agree then that plants only have value in what they are worth to animals? "Supporters of animal rights have never claimed that ALL life is sanctified, only that life which has inherent value is." "Supporters of animal rights" in this case are admitting that they value only the lives of "sentient" beings, those creatures that seem to share a consciousness with which they can empathize. "Being 'more impor-

tant' has never been and never will be an excuse to abuse others." "Being important" may not matter but your perception of "inherent value" does? How is your decision of value any more or less valid than mine?

"It can't even be proven that human beings feel pain, we can only take each other's word for it... We infer that others feel pain from various external indications." In the inability to know other things feel pain why are you so quick to dismiss plants as potentially sensitive: "members of the plant kingdom lack a central nervous system as well as an organ (a brain) that would allow them to feel pain. My dearest mother - a biology teacher - confirmed this to be true." So far as popular science says, it is an animal's nervous system that affords them the potential for feeling. But why is that necessarily the only way for any being to feel pain? Plants' respiratory systems (also according to popular science) are completely different than animals', but they still respire. "[Vegetarians] are opposed to cruelty, but they recognize that no moral harm is done by eating plants, because plants lack the ability to feel pain." I've all ready addressed this but I feel it to be a major point. Why is what you believe to be moral what I should believe to be moral aside from your thinking you're right? I don't believe moral harm is only done when the deceased experienced pain. Plants may feel pain in a way entirely unlike any system your imagination may put forth. Because they don't "feel" the way you do, you presume they cannot "feel" at all. Perhaps they do process stimulus without a brain and without an animal-like neuron. You cannot know plants cannot feel pain. You can think so, believe it, even "prove" it to yourself, but you are not a plant.

["Guilty" and "murder"] do not apply to the animal kingdom because it is incapable of morality. Humans are capable of moral choice...." Disassociate yourself a little more. You, as a self-proclaimed member of the human race, are part of the "animal kingdom". How do you know that non-human animals, in thier apparent immoral behavior, don't just ignore what you call morality? What makes you think non-human

animals are any less capable of morality than human animals? "Look, animals do not have a sense of morality...it is just as stupid to say that a baby is immoral...let's not reduce our sense of morality to that of a lion - we have the ability to act justly, so let's do it." Don't associate me with you. "We" have nothing. Don't assume I have any ability you have, regardless of how "universal" the concept is. In this passage, you compare a lion to a baby, to what is commonly thought of as a physically (and usually mentally) human animal, then you warn not to "reduce" human animals morality to a lion's morality, implying that human animals are morally advanced when compared. Do you feel more morally advanced? Well I'm glad you have that to make you happy with yourself. You have a more refined sense of morality than a lion. Don't assume I do just because you can. Comfort yourself with the knowledge that you are more morally advanced than I am as well.

"I ask why you would justify your dietary habits by observing animals when I am sure you do not look to animals as an ethical guide regarding other matters, such a truth, sexual relations, and family." I will iterate here that humans are animals regardless of how easily you can dissassociate yourself from them. Why aren't non-human animals actions justified by human animals? Personally, I don't look to anyone to justify my actions. But then I don't believe in nature. As for Darren Cahr (who I also believe needs not justify his actions) how is it you know where he looks for an ethical guide? And, besides that, I didn't see him justifying his own actions (which he did not seem to pass judgement on, that is to say he never said "my actions are just and moral because...."). I saw him questioning your inequality of judgement. "He clearly has no conception of what MORALITY and RIGHTS are." Can't you accept that conceptions of morality differ from being to being. (And for that matter may differ amongst species of the animal kingdom (I'll leave plants alone for now) allowing for you to also say "animals do not have a sense of morality" when really it could possibly be a different morality (morality being

considered absurdly subjective by me if no one else) than you own, and not just an absence.

"animal liberation activists...almost never harm another person. If they...smash the windows of a fur salon...." Physical pain is not the only form of harm. By smashing store windows, you are possibly economically, possibly emotionally, harming the store owners. If you are going to support that sort of harm, fine, I would just appreciate your recognizing it as such (but, of course, you have no obligation to.)

Summations and addendums:

— Keep in mind I am criticizing your letters, not justifying anyone else's actions.

— I realize this is a response to two entirely different people, but I've addressed you together because it's easier for me.

— I will iterate that if you wish to know more about the plant study (or any other study of plants) you should research it yourself. I am not trying to prove that plants can feel (I merely believe it a possibility), but you say with certainty that they do not.

— In my mind your moral obligations do not take precedence over my beliefs. This doesn't mean I have no morality, it means I have different morality.

— I do not believe in nature and this can cause a great rift between our belief systems and morality. I don't care if you think I'm wrong but remember I may think the same of you.

— No, plants do not have animal nervous systems. But if you refuse to accept the mere possibility that this is not the only possible way to "feel", you are being closed-minded, if only in that respect.

— Your concern, in my perception, appears similar to the "white man's burden".

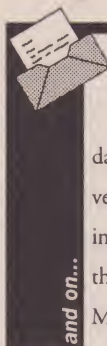
— Concerning animal testing, you say, "We could say the same thing about testing on the retarded, the poor, or even about plucking random people off the street

for testing.” According to your philosophies on food, it’s all right to eat certain coma cases, certain cases of depression (those that involve disinterest in everything), and certain cases of “mental illness” (perhaps those people so affectionately called “vegetables”). Not that I necessarily disagree with this, I just thought I’d point it out.

I may be wrong but I’m not insisting I’m right,

Alison Fair

All Mouth No Trousers



Dear Punk Planet,

In issue #14, I noticed an abundance of letters explaining why being vegetarian is sooooo good and why eating me is sooooo wrong. I have one thing to say. THESE PEOPLE MAKE ME SICK!

The weird thing is, I have no problem with the idea of being vegetarian. The problem is the reasons these people have for being meatless and the attitudes they take to defend their views. Like typical humans, they think they are always right.

I don’t get this “All of the observation humans make are correct” attitude. Even more, I don’t understand the idea that Western “morals” are definitive. Because this has enraged me so, I feel compelled to attack each individual letter, one at a time.

Letter # 1

The author of this letter says that morals do not apply to predatory animals when they kill other animals because “[they are] incapable of morality” Huh? Says who? Although I agree with the statement, it should not be believed that this is so just because all of our observations tend to point toward this conclusion. What gives us the right to say that these animals are not at least as intelligent as we are. They may have just been held back because of the lack of organs allowing them to become as technologically advanced as we are. I’m sure all would agree that it would be hard to make tools and buildings without struc-

tures such as hands to allow us to steady the components of our inventions while they were being assembled. The majority of the animal population does not possess and appendage that would allow for this. In addition, what makes us think that these animals just refrain from communicating with us. We certainly don’t attempt to talk to all of the others in our species, let alone more than a few members of other species. Lastly, these animals are not made to eat vegetation. For them it is either eat meat or die. The choice is obvious.

Letter #2

This letter is far worse in its assumptions than the first. The author says that it is impossible for plants to feel pain because “members of the plant kingdom lack a central nervous system, as well as an organ (a brain) that would allow them to feel pain”. Oh, forgive me thou who dost know all. I wasn’t aware that just because plants lack the same kind of nervous system as us, they can’t feel anything. Gee, that sounds something like saying that a hot air balloon can’t fly because it doesn’t have wings. We know that hot air balloons do fly. There seems to be a way to get things to fly even if they don’t have wings, I wonder is there a way to have things feel pain without a central nervous system? Maybe we should all think about that for a little while.

The worst thing the author did here was say that he wasn’t a hypocrite and then say that plants respond to things like singing and sunlight right after saying that plants feel no pain, or anything for that matter. He seems to think he backed up his statement by saying that it’s an automatic reaction on the plant’s part. What the fuck? The plants certainly sense changes in their environment. This indicates that they can feel something. Furthermore, the fact that when plants are pruned they grow less seems to show that plants feel pain, just like the fact that kids not doing something after they are spanked (not that I condone spanking) for doing it shows that they feel pain. By the way, if what plants do is automatic, then who’s to say that when you smack a cow on the ass, it’s flinching isn’t automatic?

Letter #3

What the fuck is this shit? This letter has no point and certainly doesn’t succeed in making one. I think we omnivores (yes, omnivores! not carnivores!) should save a cow or two and make meat patties out of this fools. He is most definitely not an effective fighter for the vegetarian cause! I’d do my best to disassociate myself from this one if I were a vegan!

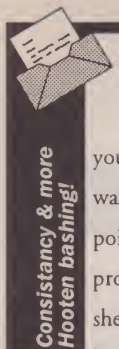
To everyone, I don’t recall important moral deciding figures in our culture ever saying that it was immoral to kill for food. By this I mean any food, PLANT OR ANIMAL! Unless you eat raw minerals, you can’t live without eating something that was once alive. I’d also like to count all the bugs that you animal rights activists have squashed in the last year! talk about a disregard for life. I must say that all this vegetarian stuff is misguided. I still eat meats and plants, but I have not killed any organism purposely in quite a while. I truly believe that I’m doing more good by not killing anything except for food than I would be if I only allowed myself to kill plants because I didn’t think they do feel pain. It’s all self preservation. I was made to eat plants and animals, and I do. I’m sure if a vegetarian was stuck somewhere with only animals to eat, they’d dig right into the flesh. If you all haven’t caught on to what I’m saying by now, I’ll clear it up for you. Forget what kind of life you eat, focus your energies on saving lab rats and rain forests equally. they’re both very important and need our help. The Earth survived for a long time with life eating other life, and if you think not eating animals is going to help the planet in some big way, you’re wrong. In any case, I’m babbling. I’ll never see why people are so hung up on basing their action on ideas and ideals that are completely our invention and have nothing to do with nature. it’s foolish at best.

Sincerely,

Rick Slama

Wynnewood, PA

P.S. In response to the Propagandi quote, “Meat is murder, dairy is still rape” in letter #2, guess what? Salad is murder and fruit is still rape!



Hey!

Consistency & more
Hooten bashing!

I picked up the fourteenth issue of your publication today and couldn't walk away without a feeling of disappointment. Collectively you put out probably the best looking zine on the shelves. But for the year or so I have been reading you have always lacked strong content.

Consistency. (spelling? sorry on the computer I am currently using there is no spell check feature.) You are lacking it on both ends of the spectrum.

Your mag is never consistently bad, or consistently good. You always hold your niche in this obscure middle ground. For example, let's start with interviews. Last issue you ran a Lifetime piece that was not informative or compelling in anyway. It was instead completely bland and merely an ego booster for a band that really gets enough recognition as it is. Yet another example, the Promise Ring interview in issue fourteen. This band has fallen on some really bad times. There really open people and probably can relate a lot to your audience. Instead of asking questions that could evoke any type of emotion (dealing with their hard times or any other issues) the piece is filled with inside jokes and generic questions like "What records are you ashamed to say you own?" or asking The Delta 72 why they did not start a techno band, instead of the R&B act they are today. How informative and important is this style of writing? Your magazine could be that much better if you concentrated on the writing and not so much on how it looks. Don't get me wrong, the layout is phenomenal.

You should just have higher standards than the current 'planetees' contributing. If you could have someone like Josh Hooten stick with layout and leave his shabby journalism for his own zine you would be taking a step in the right direction. It's just a drag to see you fall short when you are all so much better than that. From personal experience I understand how much work goes into something like this. I see your zine come out every other

month and I know what I am doing will never be as big as PP. So I try to make the words count that much more, shouldn't you? But like you said Dan, "mediocrity sells." So where do you stand?

Trevor Kelley
Extinguish Fanzine

Trevor,

I will agree with a lot of what you said. The content of PP is fairly inconsistent, although I would disagree with you about the last issue, which I felt was one of our best ever.

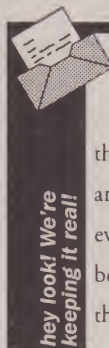
Part of the reason that the magazine looks really good is because the design is done completely 'in house', meaning that me & Josh do the whole thing. Both of us are designers by trade, so it's something that we love doing.

However, we can't write the entire magazine! That's up to contributors. I try as hard as I can to find people that are good writers to contribute stuff, but that may account for one or two pieces in any given issue. The rest comes from people that have mailed in interviews, articles, fiction & all that.

The quality of these submitted articles varies radically. Believe it or not, there actually are a great deal that don't get printed because they are so incredibly inane. That Lifetime article is a good example of one that I expected to be good (the guy had called to arrange for it and does a good zine on his own) and then it came in late, I had already built the book around it, and there was nothing to take its place.

So... are you interested in rectifying the situation? You could be writing for Punk Planet. Whatdya think about that?

Dan Sinker



Punk Planet

hey look! We're
keeping it real!

College life is ideal life, except for the frequent appearance of fascists around campus. The fascists want everyone to conform to their political beliefs. They set up booths on the mall that advocate the government assuming control of everything from industry to language. And I contemptuously give this peo-

ple an extremely audible "fuck off."

In my war with the fascists, I draw strength from PUnk PLanet. I'm not trying to get teary eyed or dish out some emotional bullshit here, but I really enjoy the individualistic ideal of your magazine. There was a time when I could say "punk rock" in general, but every asshole who's heard the Offspring thinks he's a punk these days. I could go into a room full of modern "punks" and ask the question "will all the true punks please rise," and everyone would stand. Then, if I said "those who have ever heard the New York Dolls, MC5, Minor Threat, the Weird Love Makers, or 88 Fingers Louie, or the Bouncing Souls please rise" maybe, (and I mean maybe) ten of those people would stand.

But enough of my random bullshit

Just wanted to express my gratitude for keeping the true spirit alive.

Cheers,

Loren Pruzin



YES.

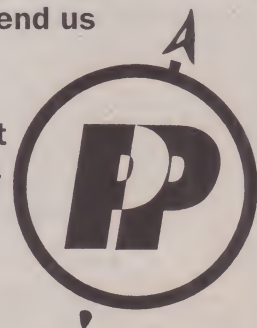
Dear Punk Planet,

Have you ever printed a letter that was shorter than the little black rectangle next to it with the annoying comments?

Mark

Hey you there!
You look like you've got something to say. Scribble it down & send us a letter.

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"Drop it," I say to George, my standard, by now automatic response when he tries to eat one of the luckless scratch cards that so appropriately decorate Spring Street. There must be at least a couple hundred of them that litter our 3 block trek to the likker store. A trek that's become a bi-weekly one now that I've graduated. Or at least almost graduated. There's that sordid business of a lost library book I have to clear up, but we'll call it graduated for the sake of continuity, O.K?

I get a self conscious hello from the washed out, defeated looking couple sitting on the steps of 235 Spring Street, the only residents (barring the two little girls I can see and hear through the upstairs window jumping on the bed) who were able to dodge the long term incarceration that cocaine trafficking is apt to bring. It's a hello meant more as damage control than a genuine gesture of neighborly goodwill.

"Hello," I say back trying to inflect absolutely nothing. It must be weird for them, every time somebody walks by, having to wonder if they know about all their troubles. Or if all the little kids that live around them tease their two children about it, or if all the little children are even allowed to play with their children anymore. Or if their kids teachers know. Or if the mailman knows. Or if the whole neighborhood thinks you're horrible people. It must be so embarrassing to be those people.

I look down the leash at my little 10 month old and think, "This is no place to raise a youngster."

I was walking George the night the house got busted. Two cruisers, one motorcycle cop, and one paddy-wagon, all four with lights going, stopping traffic, bringing all the neighbors to their windows, all to, in the end, quietly take away an old man, his son, and a box of evidence. Some scales, some product, some plastic baggies and a bunch of cash. I noticed that the baggies were Stop and Shop food storage and freezer bags, just like the ones in my pocket I use to clean up after George. I wondered for a second how many plastic bags like these have been confiscated sum total in drug busts. I made a mental note to start a nationwide campaign to get law enforcement officials to redistribute plastic bags seized in

drug raids to dog owners. So we can do our part to clean up the streets, you know what I'm saying?

Of the dozen or so silhouettes I saw peeking through venetian blinds, backlit by the electric blue glow of television, I wonder how many were disappointed the scene wasn't more exciting like on "COPS."

I think the difference between my old neighborhood and where I live now can be summed up by saying that I used to live amongst drug "dealers" and now I live amongst drug "traffickers." I guess that's the difference between lower income and middle income. The building I used to live in abutted the Mission Hill projects. The crime there was no less abundant, but a whole lot more threatening. Muggings, shootings, stuff like that. Stuff that could happen to you. Stuff that happened to a lot of people I knew over the 4 years I lived there. Moving out to a kind of suburban area I feel a million times safer, though I see just as many flashing police lights and cruisers hauling off criminals. My new neighborhood is full of wife-beaters, minor league mafiosos, and of course drug traffickers. In my old neighborhood the crime was very much in your face, very much a threat to you. The people where I live now don't want you to know anything about what they've got going on, so they go out of their way to keep it a secret. They go out of their way to be nice to you so you don't suspect anything. My neighborhood is full of "the kind, quiet type who pretty much keep to themselves" you always hear the neighbors on T.V. describing to the news reporters after somebody gets hauled off for killing their in-laws for the insurance money, or to collect on the will. Regardless, I feel safe here even though I won't let Kim walk George at night. I'm assuming the relative safety for her in this town is very different than that it is for me.

I haven't seen the husband from next door in a couple of months, and this is a good thing. We're all hoping she's kicked him out for good this time. It's always so easy from the outside of an abusive relationship to wonder why anybody would stay in it. I can't fathom the reasons, but they must be pretty compelling. She seems determined this time though. I don't know how many times she's kicked him out before but I think it's safe to assume this isn't the first. They have two children, one is about four, the other thirteen or fourteen. It would seem odd to begin abusing your spouse this far into the game. We haven't lived here long enough to know for sure.

Yesterday the four year old was on his porch while I was on mine. I was reading, he was being four years old. I've never spoken to him before but he returns my waves and always smiles at us. Everybody is a friend when you're four years old. I've seen him in the yard with his father trying to help out while dad works on the car, or the lawnmower, or some such task. He has all the tools memorized and when his dad asks if he can get him the phillips head screwdriver, the little boy digs through the toolbox as fast as he can trying to find it. He pulls out the correct tool and holds it up like a trophy, proud of himself with a smile big as his little head can carry. His father is supportive and appreciative. Dad is his hero. He follows him around like he's attached to his belt. Dad doesn't beat his kids. We were staring at each other over the railing, across the 15 feet of space between our houses. He chose not

to return my wave today. Instead he wanted to hide behind the grill and try not to let me see him spitting off the porch to the ground. Judging by the devious look on his face before, and the satisfied look afterwards, this was an activity he knew he wasn't allowed to indulge in. He'd look over, I'd pretend I wasn't looking, he'd spit, I'd pretend I didn't see, and he'd giggle like crazy. I could hear mom inside banging around in the kitchen asking him what was so funny out there. He'd look over at me and smile, say nothing, and go back to his mischief. He was good at making himself invisible. I only wondered for a half a second how he had acquired that skill. Mom came out onto the porch to collect the little guy for dinner in relatively high spirits, considering the anguish which must accompany a black eye like that.

I always wave to her and say hi. I try to seem naive to her situation when I do, though it's hard not to know all about it when she wears her story on her face in wounds and expression. I try my hardest to let her know that I'm not judging her, that I would help her if she needed it, that she could ask us, but that's a lot of information to try and get across in a smile. I keep telling myself to say these things when I see her again, but it's not an easy thing, and it never seems like the right moment. I've promised myself, right moment or not, I'd do it if her husband ever moves back in. I've promised myself I'd try my hardest to never be one of those people that stood around and did nothing.

The older kid is at that age where he's just incredibly difficult to not hate. His mother tries her hardest, but I think she comes up short. I guess it's harder for him to not be a dick than it is for most kids. I can't say I'd be a model youth if my dad beat the crap out of my mom. And I guess she has it a little harder than most trying to be the model mom. So instead of talk, they yell.

I know a lot about this neighborhood. I see and hear a lot when I'm out walking George. I hear the mom's screaming at the dad's. I hear the dad's screaming at the kids. I see the kids drinking, or getting high in the park with their "bitch" this or "ho" that. I hear them asking me to buy for them. I see them stealing bikes late at night. I see them trying to mask out this white suburban nothingness with their amateur-night gangster leans and overzealous machismo. I see them coming up short and knowing it, always trying to one up each other in their quest for ill-gotten props. Then I hear the news reporting 4 Medford youths being held for the beating of one Medford boy, and the gang rape of one Medford girl. It seems the sixteen year old couple were at the reservoir, a popular make-out spot when they were dragged from their car. They had to swim across the Mystic river in the dark to escape their attackers. I think about the woman next door and how hard she's trying to stay afloat. I think about her oldest son smoking in the park with his friends wondering when he's going to be the one asking me to buy him a forty. Or if he'll be the one who holds the girl down while his homies rape her. I think about his little brother and how sweet he is at age four, but how I'll probably hate him someday too. And so will his mother. If he could just stay four forever.



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I'll be funny next time. Hope all is well out there.

219A Spring Street, Medford MA. 02155

E.mail to astrocomm@aol.com



Prefatory remark. I think "Crossfire" and such programs are about as relevant and informative as professional wrestling. And less entertaining.

Election year '96. Once again the cognoscenti are seriously discussing the "left-wing" slant of the media. The last time I heard such a flurry of remarks on the subject was back in '92, another election year.

That same year I was interning on a TV show for teenagers. I remember having a conversation with one of the producers about the appropriateness of me working there. After all, I told her, I'm long out of college and besides, I wasn't exactly a normal teenager.

Oh that! Ms. Producer (a very interesting and encouraging person, by the way) said. It was her belief that just about everybody involved in her kind of work—writing, producing, etc.—were all troubled, atypical teens.

It struck me then, How odd! People like "us" are the ones in charge of communicating to young people whose experience is so completely different. How could "we" really understand how "normal" teens felt, what they wanted, how they saw things, how to tell their stories? Ultimately, wouldn't we just end up talking to our counterparts—the next mixed-up generation of future journalists and broadcasters?

Historically, the means of mass communication, writing hieroglyphics, say, have always been in the hands of an elite. Not many people knew how to need and write and those that did were either rich or beholden to the rich.

Is it really any surprise that we know a lot about kings' lives and a lot less about peasants? (Shakespeare wrote Henry the Fifth not Butch the Serf.) Peasants had to use other means to talk about their lives: folk music for one.

Things are more democratic today. More people know how to read

and write. More people have the means to get their own information and to tell their own stories.

But how broadly can most of us cast our ideas and viewpoints?—mass communication is still largely in the hands of an elite. Elites full of people like my producer patroness with not only unusual childhoods, but also willing to subscribe to a particular code of standards and mores.

This is a long way around of saying that I don't think the mainstream media are particularly left-wing or right-wing. If they are centrist at all, it is because they, themselves, have designated the ends of the spectrum on which they report. The media have their own sub-culture in the American landscape. They are their own little milieu, complete with customs, etiquette, patois, attitudes. They know a lot about their little world. They know a little about many things, but a lot about nothing else. They are, in fact, the professionally ignorant.

Which makes a certain amount of sense. I mean they're the MEDIA—mediums, channels, conveyers, middlemen—right? They go to the source, or maybe a source a few steps from the original source, digest the information as best they can and present it or misrepresent it to the world. Except, of course, that some people have direct access to newspapers and TV. They don't have to wait for their views to be filtered or trivialized by journalists and broadcasters. Usually, they're right-wing. I mean, how is it that I see and read far more of Patrick Buchanan than of Jerry Brown? (And I mean even before he was running for President. Didn't he used to be a regular wrestler on "Crossfire"?)

The media aren't left-wing. They're perhaps left of the right-wingers who get on TV regularly to chastise the media for being left-wing.

Go back to the Sixties and you'll find that the media were scornful of women's rights (equal pay for equal work), environmental responsibility, anti-war efforts even by the respectable and family-oriented. Today, it's the same thing: filter the issue through the weirdest angle, the most foolish manifestation (e.g. a new law) of an idea, interview the least rational and most strident representative of the movement.

Example: There was news coverage of squatters in New York who used violence to resist the police trying to evict them. There was not one word, not one image of a family-group (complete with very young children) I saw put out on the streets after six months of renovating an abandoned building. Here they were: exemplifying hard work, family values, self-sufficiency. Then, they are back on the public dole under circumstances which will strain the integrity of the family unit. I've never seen a cogent exploration of the squatters' perspectives on television or in mainstream print.

Viewpoints that are opposed to the mainstream line are never presented intelligibly to the public. They are always "explained" by, filtered through the agenda of a newsperson, or worse through the mouth of the Opposition! (How would you like your most passionate beliefs "explained" by someone totally opposed to them!) That is called Balance in the news trade.

Seems like I have to bring this up every issue, but for those of you

not familiar with my story: I come from a conservative background. I was well and truly grown-up before I ever quarrelled with it seriously. There are still many conservative types whom I love and respect (my parents for two). But I had an "inquiring" mind and so when various issues entered public awareness. I sought out opposing viewpoints. "Why do these people think the way they do? What are their premises and perspectives. Why do they come up with answers they do?"

The mainstream press never answered these questions (on The War, on Nicaragua, on the neutron bomb). I used to think it was my fault. Somehow I wasn't reading enough. Somehow I wasn't paying enough attention. Looking back it seems so very strange, so ironic, that the most coherent explanations I got of some of these peculiar viewpoints were from movies. "Under Fire" for Nicaragua, "El Norte" for Guatemala and illegal immigration, "The Official Story" for Argentina, "Hair" for the Vietnam War (I'm so embarrassed). I never did find anywhere any plain explanation why people opposed the neutron bomb.

Understand, the point I'm making about these movies is not that they're right or wrong on any of the stands they so openly champion. I'm saying the ONLY places in mainstream discourse I could find those viewpoints—and so come to understand a significant percentage of my fellow Americans—were in these movies. That's ridiculous. Did the journalists not do their homework, or did they arbitrarily decide we didn't need to hear these "left-wing" opinions unfiltered?

I think it's the former. I think mainstream journalists are out of touch with lots of currents affecting millions of Americans today. Case in point: The surprise expressed by media mavens nationwide, when the verdict of the O.J. Simpson trial revealed the broad dichotomy between black and white outlooks on the event.

Well. So that's it. Here's what we've learned:

1. "Crossfire"=WWF
2. Only right-wingers get unfiltered access to the media
3. The media so far from left-wing, really represent only themselves

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I always take my diary with me when I travel.

One needs something sensational to read on the train.

— Oscar Wilde

It's a sad fact, perhaps not widely enough known, that few if any people ever find our personal lives quite so fascinating as we ourselves do. Yet that never seems to discourage writers, filmmakers, musicians, or even, God help us, politicians, from reg-

ularly sharing the most intimate minutiae of their existences with anyone who happens into eye or earshot.

I myself will admit to falling victim to this particularly American predilection more often than I would like. As recently as my last column, in fact, I revealed a side of myself that was apparently unknown to most of my readers - and even to quite a few people who know me personally - even though it seemed achingly obvious to me.

The reason I wrote about the depression that has afflicted me for most of my life, despite fearing that most people had no need or desire to read about it, was that I found myself unable to write about anything else. It finally came down to a choice of writing that column or none at all.

While, like Mr. Wilde, I would prefer to believe that any and all of my personal experiences invariably possess the power to both thrill and enlighten, occasional bouts of what is no doubt an entirely uncalled for modesty impel me to at least attempt to write about something else.

Once in a while I succeed, but I'm afraid this is not one of those times. Heaven knows I tried, to the point where our all-patient and kind editor was no doubt tearing out hair that he'll need some day for more worthwhile purposes. I wrote two nearly complete columns that at the last moment I consigned to the dustbin of cyberspace, the first because it gave me a headache and the second because it drove me to drink.

Those who know me might retort that I don't really need to be driven to drink, that I can just as easily walk or take the bus, but that's another matter; the trouble was that I was going against the grain of what really was happening in my life at the moment. Political or sociological discussions can be perfectly riveting if the one doing the discussing is himself riveted by them. But I had bigger things, or at least more specific things, on my mind.

"It always comes back to you, you, you, doesn't it?" someone might be tempted to inquire, and yes, I guess it does. My parents did their best to raise me to be humble, but they didn't have much more luck than with their attempts to make me hard-working, responsible, devout or abstemious (look the last one up; I'm tired of defining words for all you victims of American public education).

When I wrote about depression, I got several responses, most notably one from John Crawford, who expressed surprise that someone suffering from my condition could have accomplished as much as I supposedly have. "Most people I know who are that depressed are lucky if they can crawl out of bed in the morning."

Well, as it happens, there are many times that I can't get out of bed. Sometimes I sit in my room for days at a time doing practically nothing at all. If I've achieved anything remarkable in my life (I assume he's referring to the record label, writing, or bands I've been involved with), it's mostly been done on those intervening days when things were semi-normal.

Those years when I was working an average of 16 hours a day to simultaneously get a university degree and build Lookout Records were not a sign of incredible discipline or diligence; they were a product of a desperate escapism. Reeling from a failed relationship, a terrible loneliness, and a perilously fragile sense of self-worth, I buried myself in work, some of it useful, much of it barely so, in what proved to be a

vain hope that enough accomplishments or acquisitions might somehow convince others that I was deserving of their love.

Convincing others, however, was small potatoes compared to the one I really had to convince: myself. It's generally tough to impress me, but almost anyone stands a better chance of doing so than I do. Even on the rare occasions when I'm willing to admit that I've done something right, I'll probably insist that I did it by accident and/or for all the wrong reasons.

An oppressively religious upbringing and a considerably less than functional family probably explain a lot of that, but what they don't explain is how so many other people overcome the same or even worse circumstances and go on to be happy, charming and successful. Again, I think it comes back to a sense of self, which is ironic, since one of the columns I tossed out before writing this one bemoaned the excessively self-indulgent individualism that I fear is undermining American society and the psyches of way too many of its members.

The thing is, there's a continuum at work, and a delicate balancing act as well, between being a strong self-empowered individual and a being a productive, responsible part of a larger society. Go too far in one direction and you risk becoming an egotistical, loudmouthed, selfish jerk; too far the other way, and you end up a mindless ant in a pointless anthill.

The maddening conundrum is that you can't have one without the other. Be selfless, giving, generous, and hard-working, and while the world will be happy to take advantage of you, it is unlikely to remember your name. Spend a lifetime advancing your own aims at the expense of others and your fame and fortune may be the envy of all but your life will have approximately the worth and appearance of the beetle dung it will ultimately become.

If this is starting to sound suspiciously spiritual, perhaps there is a reason. My conclusion about why I was unable to write the other columns and found writing this one fairly simple relates to something the Chinese call *dao* (you may have also seen it written *tao*). Like many Chinese words, it can't be literally translated ("The *dao* that can be told is not the eternal *dao*," the saying goes), but the most important of its many meanings means roughly "the way."

Now in English "way" has a plethora of usages as well; some of them being, "Which way is it?" "That's way too much," "Way to go!" and "No way!" But the one that comes closest to capturing the Chinese sense of *dao* is "That's the way it is."

Not the right way or the wrong way or the way in, out, or around; the way. Dump a body of water on top of a hill, and somehow, no matter if it takes centuries or millennia, that water will find its way back to the sea. That way is its *dao*. It doesn't matter if it has to chew away an entire mountain range, one grain of sand at a time, until it's created a Grand Canyon, that water will get where it has to go.

So too it is with our lives, with one none too subtle difference being that we humans are not inclined to flow with the grace and wisdom of water. We're more likely to try and butt a hole through the rock with our heads, or flap our arms until they fall off in the hope that we might learn to fly, or walk 10,000 miles in the opposite direction on the

off chance that the sea might come to meet us there instead.

It's that stubborn sense of will that makes us human, of course; it drives us to our greatest triumphs and our deepest shames. Human history, all of it, is a mind-boggling admixture of brilliance and folly in which we are fated to swim and from which we could no sooner escape than we could slip the bonds of our own imagined selves.

But just as there is generally both a hard and easy way to do the same thing, there is also one way, which is neither hard nor easy, but just is. Thinking back upon your lives, I'm sure you can recall times when no thought, no effort, no decision was required. You simply knew and acted, in precisely the same instant. It might have been to push someone out of the path of a speeding car, to leave, on a wild whim, everything and everyone you've ever known in search of a new dream, to turn to that certain someone in that certain moment and say without doubt or hesitation, "I love you," knowing full well that in this whole wide world there wasn't a single other thing you could possibly do.

Everyone alive has known such moments, whether or not they recognized them at the time. What I'm suggesting is that it's possible, no, more than that, necessary, to live your whole life that way. As it says in the commentary to another ancient Chinese text, the I Ching, "He who acts from the deepest levels of his heart makes no mistakes."

"Use your head," you're often told by parents, teachers, or random passersby, but using your head will never get you to the level of understanding required to truly thrive. The head can think, and with enough practice, can think very well, but the heart knows, and that is why it makes no mistakes. Thinking is a very productive activity, but all it produces is questions. The answers invariably come from the heart.

I'm hope this doesn't sound too cosmic or metaphysical or Yoda-like; these are things that I've learned from what is turning out to be a pretty long life (far longer than I ever imagined back in the days when I never expected or wanted to see 21). As often as I've learned these lessons, though, I've had to relearn them, because one distinguishing characteristic of the human species, and of this human in particular, is a nearly insufferable streak of arrogance.

What I mean is that every time things started going my way, I quickly forgot how it happened, and instead began interpreting my good fortune as evidence of my irrefutable and irrevocable brilliance. It's not that I didn't deserve credit for making good things happen, but that I was giving credit to the wrong part of myself, to my bullheaded, flattery-loving, whimsical and devious ego rather than to the calm and constant certainty of a loving heart.

The result has been that throughout my life I've barreled off in all sorts of counter-productive directions, convinced I could think my way through out of any and all difficulties, until I reached a crisis point where unhappiness and loneliness forced me to undo everything, to go back to the very fundamentals, to the center of things, and essentially re-invent myself.

It's not so different from what music, or any art form has to do every few years, and it's not so different from the way that every person grows, but I guess I just tend to be a bit more drastic and a bit more persistent about it. I'm nearing an age where many people are already contemplating retirement, while I'm making my umpteenth

attempt to start my life all over again.

It's a very exciting time, and a very frightening one. Despite what they say, most people don't really welcome change, and the older they get, the more they prefer that things stay familiar and comfortable. It's traumatic enough for me to change what I eat for dinner, let alone re-order my whole existence.

But it's not something I have a choice in; I can either change or I can begin to die. I know from past experience that I'll have to leave many people and places behind, and that along the way there might be times of incredible loneliness and discouragement. But I also know from experience that every time one of these major changes happens, it sets the stage for a whole new burst of creativity, for a whole new way of seeing and being and experiencing the miracle of being alive.

I know what some of you must be thinking. "But... but... is that punk?" Well, to be perfectly honest, kid, I don't know. Probably not. But as one of my boyhood heroes, Mr. Bob Dylan (the same one, by the way, who said "He not busy being born is busy dying") put it: "It's all right, ma, it's life and life only."



"Welcome to the Land of the Ugly" the sign should have read. Instead it stated, "Welcome to Wisconsin Dells" in large cursive letters.

Quality time with my mom is often somewhat stressful (though I usually enjoy it) and being surrounded by hundreds of morons certainly didn't help. Everywhere I looked I saw shells of human beings consuming everything in sight, accumulating junk, and lining up to engage in totally inane, meaningless activities. I was appalled. And embarrassed for these people. Ah yes, by now you must be asking, "Then why the fuck were you there?" Well, I didn't want to disappoint my mom by saying no and thereby breaking her fragile heart. I'd only seen her once this summer by then so I relented. Boy was I in for a treat.

The first activity that my mom and I participated in was a boat tour of the Wisconsin River and the Dells. At every point-of-interest docking, we'd alight onto the shore and walk around, gaping at all the boring natural features of the Dells and snapping photos of brown rocks and shrubs. Near the end of every short hike there was an enormous, gaudy gift shop complete with a snack bar, smack in the middle of a large canyon or forest like a huge colorful zit on an otherwise unmarred face. Unhindered capitalism - how I love thee! When the entire tour was complete, the guides passed around these ugly-ass booklets about the history of the Dells. They were, of course, for sale. About half

of the slobbering idiots on the boat gobbled up this shit like it was codeine and they'd just had their arms amputated and tucked their booklets under their arms with the trillions of other nifty gadgets they'd spent the day emptying their wallets for. Now, I've long ago accepted the fact that 95% of the human race is comprised of muddle-brained mental dwarfs but rarely am I forced to mingle with the shake at the bottom of the barrel to such an extent. How many of these people were going to run back to their expensive hotel suites, bubbling over with excitement, to pore and delight over "A History of the Wisconsin Dells"? This was commercialism at its basest, most simple level: "You buy." "OK. <Grunt>."

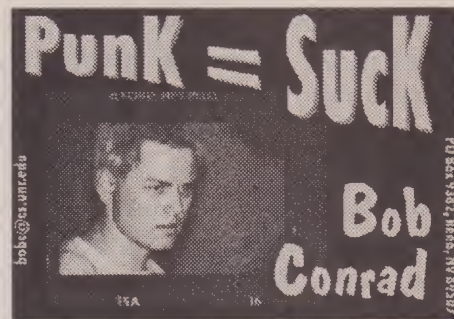
I spent a great deal of the weekend marveling at all the lazy, ugly, rich vacationers. My mom and I were amazed by one particular example of couch-potato-land at the parking lot for the boat ride. The lot was no more than an average city block long yet there was a trolley that took people to and from their cars and the ticket purchasing booth. I'm sure that the average Target parking lot is twice as big as that one but you don't see any fucking shuttle buses or trolleys there. Criminy. When I wasn't gawking at the hordes of wallets-on-two-legs, I was busy combating overwhelming feelings of shame for contributing to the upkeep of such a wasteland. I think I hit my nadir when I broke down and bought nachos and a hot dog during the Tommy Bartlett Amazing Sky and Water show. I felt like total scum slumping back to my seat with an armful of the staples of the American "diet". I was glad that no one I knew could see me at that point in time, cowering in my seat, sullenly wiping the salt off of soggy chips in the middle of Spending Binge, USA.

As abrupt a change as this is in attitude, I ended up spending probably the most exciting 10 minutes of my life during the last day there. I bungee-jumped for the first (and probably only) time in my life. My fucking mom actually shelled out thirty bucks for me to dive 130 feet upside down into the air toward a flimsy and ineffectual safety net. The "guide" cracked jokes about acrophobia while he strapped the bungee cord to my ankles. I was starting to get nervous. By the time we began climbing up the huge metal support arch in a tiny cage I was actually shaking. I tried - twice - to back out but that smooth-talking guide wouldn't let me. The cage clicked into place at the top of the arch after an eternity of climbing. Suddenly, I became aware of complete silence. The view of the ground was paralyzing. All I could focus on was the immense, absolutely terrifying amount of space between me and the little ant people down below. Hurl my body into that void with either the cord or the cement to stop me? Where the hell was my sanity? Oops, I must have left it on the ground with my stomach. How could I be so insensitive as to force my mom to witness her eldest daughter plunge to her own death? Why can't I breathe? I'm gonna pee my pants! I don't want to die! AAAHHHH! — Such were the thoughts rolling through my noggin. The guide somehow managed to calm me down. Those little green pills he force fed me must have been pretty potent because I was perfectly relaxed within 5 minutes.

He stood firmly in front of me and held my clasped hands steadily while I leaned back through the opening in the cage. "Just pretend you're falling back into your bed." As soon as he let go of my hands, I

burst out an extended, "Fuuuck!" to all the families and kids watching down below. I opened my eyes halfway through the fall and could see absolutely nothing as I bounced around in the air like a life-sized marionette. I felt exhilarated and breathless as well as thankful for still being alive until the guide maliciously undid the cord and I fell 50 some feet to the concrete in a jumbled heap of broken bones and split skin. As the ankle harness was being undone, I kept trying to make myself believe that I had actually done something as reckless as bungee jump 13 fucking stories. That was a great feeling - that I could overcome my fear of heights (as well as the instinct to keep my body intact) for one moment just by forcing myself to confront that fear head on. AND, I've got it all on videotape. "Hey kids, wanna see mommy almost kill herself again?"

Throughout the ride back to my mom's house, I talked her ear off about how I couldn't believe that I had done it, how scared I was, and how high I felt while I was falling. I had visions of driving back to Wisconsin Dells with all my friends and doing it again, of hang-gliding, of skydiving, of jumping off mountains, of being in Taco Bell commercials. Yes! My life had changed! I had conquered fear!...Within a few days, I was grounded again in reality, acknowledging the fact that I would probably never do anything that crazy again. At this point, I don't even know if I want to.



lied. I don't care what most people think or say about me. So I won't bother replying to most letters written to Punk Planet complaining about yours truly. Doing so would lend credibility to people whose lack of intelligence deserves much less. Besides, if readers of this column can't construct a simple sentence, or grasp a basic concept, any comprehension on their behalf that extends beyond a third-grade level would be a surprise from my perspective. I'm not relishing in amazement at this moment, if you can dig what I'm saying.

I recently read a review of Second Guess where the editor gives high praises to my writing. What he didn't like about Second Guess was my focus on this thing called punk; apparently, he felt my "brain power" could be better utilized on topics other than what he calls the "hypo-critical monster that punk has become." Even though I have my own valid reasons for being involved with punk rock, I wholeheartedly agree with him.

When I spend half a column presenting a Marxist critique of modern technology, and some kid writes in complaining about calling his

revered scenester bad names, I can't help but feel like these words fall of deaf, or at the very least, retarded ears. If a reader thinks one of my columns is only about talking negatively about one person or a group of people, failing to see the broader and more significant points I raise, I can only acknowledge their confused reaction with a gratuitous nod and move forward.

So I continue. The few words of encouragement I receive are gratifying and appreciated (count 'em, TWO fan mails received this month, both within the same week; of course this was counterbalanced by yet another less-than-happy reader who tries to assume I'm an F.B.I. agent set out to discredit you slovenly revolutionaries. What can I say? I try.), and the people who hold a special punk place in my heart are what keep me going. That's really enough. I can't be bothered with most people if they can't understand a reasoned point, even if it contradicts their shallow punk rock view of the world.

With today's education standards, presuming there are some anymore, people aren't taught how to think. High school kids — no, COLLEGE kids — can't write, and their lives are entrenched with all that is superficial despite instructors who should be teaching them otherwise. Kids can read and write (but don't) and perform basic math functions, but it's been my observation that words of wisdom rarely come from youth.

A few areas of study taught me the beauty of knowledge, the power of being able to think somewhat coherently. Studying photography opened my eyes to a new way of looking at the world; it taught me how to read a picture, to become visually literate. Studying percussion taught me that Western life is rigid in the way we structure time; our life's rhythms are immature and eventually unhealthy considering our more natural environments don't beat at 60-second cycles. After so-called primitive tribes "gave us" odd-time signatures, honkeys got lost and wanted to groove to everything grouped into fours. Any punk band NOT playing 4/4 beats is often considered unpunk, a natural hypocrisy considering punk's presumed rebellious nature.

My high school trigonometry teacher used to whine at our confusion over complex problems and equations. His George McFly demeanor and sad tone of voice will always be in head: "You're not THINKING!" he used to wail when we just couldn't get it. Numbers and methods aren't always important, being able to solve problems is.

University-level journalism brought to life some sorely needed writing skills my high-school education failed to touch upon. Suddenly, when relearning for the umpteenth time the function of nouns and verbs, my journalism professor, and later my mentor, stressed the importance of a simple sentence. I think his theories outdid themselves to the point of abuse. But you can make that judgment. Or can you?

Finally, even though I've always had a penchant for debate and a striving for fairness, my critical thinking class put terms to concepts I had always knew existed but never before had I placed a name on them. That's what we'll discuss today, in brief.

PART I - LIES

There are two kinds of lies: the one of commission, a willful, common lie, and one of omission, withholding information to skew a point of view. When shallow media critics say "the media lies to us," they aren't talking about deliberate lies of commission; the media lies more often by NOT telling you information.

An example: Two issues ago a reader complained about my critique of how punk products, CDs in particular, are priced. Since he didn't tell you that his rent and bills are paid by his job, and not by selling CDs, he's not telling you that his record label is subsidized. Record labels that are solvent — that aren't funded by an outside job or benefactor (i.e., parents who provide room and board) — charge more for their products in order to cover other costs that mom, dad or your job aren't paying.

If you don't give the complete picture, you aren't telling the truth. If readers aren't given a complete picture, they can't form a complete judgment or argument. Way too many people lie these days.

PART II - CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENT

To construct an argument, let's look at a critique of Punk Planet. Not my own but one of a fellow zinester. This person writes in his zine an unsubstantiated report of Punk Planet's decision to have itself sold through the Barnes & Noble chain. His reasoning for why this is bad is because Barnes & Noble is mainstream and only trendies will be carrying out Punk Planet under their arms next to their copies of "Dookie." Such a complaint, the editor says, is what dilutes the punk pool, what "diffuses the bomb." I'm not at all simplifying his argument because that's all it was; the author gave no basis for his opinions and failed to back them up with any concrete examples of how Punk Planet's distribution will dilute punk theory.

Lesson one: If you try to make a point, back it up with a specific. "So-and-so's a cunt," you say? "How so?" I ask. "She just is," you repeat. "She's a cunt because she's a cunt? That doesn't make sense. You're telling me nothing," I'll reply. "What did she do to you to make you think she's a cunt? What is it about her actions that makes her a cunt? WHY is she a cunt?" If you're making a point of criticism, explain WHY and give specific examples. Resorting to the initial attack as your reasoning is called circular reasoning. It won't get you anywhere.

Lesson two: Use consistent arguments. Slagging Punk Planet for chain-store distribution won't weigh much if your own magazine is distributed by Tower Magazines, assuming you didn't omit that useful fact in the first place. The editor we're talking about did. The "diluting the pool" argument backfires on him.

Lesson three: Construct valid arguments. An argument is valid if its premises, or examples, are true, they follow logically and the conclusion is derived from the valid premises. An example:

Premise A: Spot is a white dog.

Premise B: Spot has chronic diarrhea.

Conclusion: Therefore, Spot is a white dog with chronic diarrhea.

If both premises can be proven to be true, and since the conclusion follows logically, the argument is sound.

An example of a poor argument:

Premise A: Rancid looks and plays punk rock.

Premise B: Rancid is on MTV.

Premise C: MTV is not punk rock.

Conclusion: Therefore, Rancid is not punk rock.

This is a poor argument because none of the premises, except B, can be proven true unless there is a concrete definition of what punk is. Since there is NOT and never will be, a better argument would be:

Premise A: Rancid looks and plays a style of music commonly considered punk.

Premise B: Rancid is on MTV.

Premise C: MTV rarely played punk videos until punk music became profitable in the mainstream music market.

Conclusion: Rancid's willful action to be on MTV contributes to MTV's decision to air punk rock now that it is profitable in the mainstream music market.

This is a reasonable argument, and because it's set up with less specific language, it follows logically and is a BETTER argument than the previous one. Even though in this instance we're avoiding being specific — you pretty much have to when using vague terms — when making a point, say about Punk Planet "diluting the pool," being more particular about language makes what you're saying more convincing.

To avoid looking like an idiot, the above Punk Planet critic could have written: "Punk Planet recently admitted to selling their magazine through a distributor to the Barnes and Noble chain. In addition, Punk Planet has been sold in other chain stores including Tower Magazines. My magazine is also sold to Tower simply because they sell more than any DIY distributor, more people will read it, and I get paid on time. HOWEVER, since I believe that chain stores and the corporations that own them have no interest in punk rock unless it generates cash for them, I think it's more admirable for small-press publications to avoid distribution in large chains if they can help it. Punk Planet seems to be going out of its way to be sold in chains, and I consider this a dangerous practice if Punk Planet is truly concerned about keeping DIY values alive and well, as some of its key shitworkers often claim."

More elaboration would help, but see how this is a much stronger and realistic criticism? If you hang your views on a slogan while ignoring subtle complexities, you're going to look like a jackass. This is reason number one why I've never considered myself a punk rocker and why I have such a low tolerance for idiot thinking.

PART III - POOR THINKING

Abuse of Theoretical Models

Ever heard this one? A protagonist asks the question: "If a tree in a forest falls, and nobody is around to hear it, does it really make

a sound?"

The obvious, and true, answer is "Yes." A philosophical answer is, "We don't know for sure, because there is no way to prove if a sound exists or not."

Why is the philosophical answer poor? Because it ignores a simple law of probability: If every documented falling tree makes a sound, and the laws of physics concur with the reasons the sound is made, it follows logically that EVERY tree not documented will also make a sound when it falls, since a quality of sound is not that it is humanly documented. Saying otherwise is poor, unrealistic and antiquated thinking. Such examples have no place in valid discussion.

Example two is tougher: "Rights don't exist," the devil's advocate states. "Where's your right to life if you're a survivor of a shipwreck, out in the middle of an ocean thousands of miles from another living human and sharks are surrounding you, waiting — or not — your impending death. Where is your right to life?"

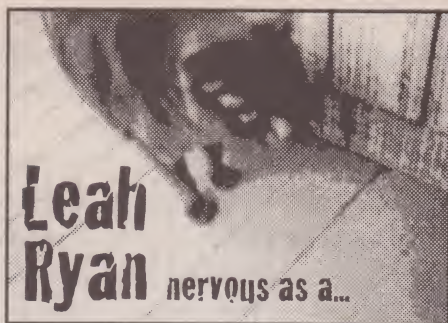
Rights, as Fred Woodworth cautions, exist as ideas. "Without them, we're lost," he says. In this improbable situation, sure your life is likely to end. In real life this would most likely not happen. In real life, your existence can be declared officially null and void the minute you can get hit by a car jaywalking, or when some gangsta had a bad day and decides the cap belongs in your ass. Does this mean our rights are no longer valid? Of course not. The fact of the matter is that life is fragile in the sense that it can end at any moment. What's important to realize is that since we are alive; we make conscious choices, we have functioning brains (well, some of us), and because our existence is conscious, we hold ideas. Our ideas are our "rights." Our rights are affected by force, coercion and overcrowding. Fundamental to the human condition is the need for food, shelter and warmth. With too many people and not enough resources, "rights" to life become fragile and in potential conflict; hence hostile urban centers where people live on streets.

I could go on with this argument but I won't. The main thing to remember is that, as always, if you want to be taken seriously in any form of constructive dialogue, you're going to have to use your head and be realistic. People who think it's punk to abandon their brains in favor of grade-school behavior and rationality need not waste their time with me. Because, frankly, I've had enough.

CREDITS

I've been neglecting some favorable mentions. The above photo is credited to my dad who photographed Zoinks! playing a seriously flawed show in Austin, Texas last year. I normally wear glasses and look like a dweeb.

Jennifer Beggs, my sweetheart, helps edit this column before it goes to Dan. She also took the Breast Wishes photo of my tit last summer in Chicago (the photo from my old column header). She's a valuable part of my life and I thank her for her generosity and support.



By the time you read this, I will be in Iowa. That's right. Iowa. I was accepted to the MFA program in Playwriting (that's Master of Fine Arts, yous) at the University of Iowa in Iowa City (that's Iowa City Iowa) and it was just too good an opportunity to pass up. Do I sound like I'm making excuses? Rationalizing? Trying to talk myself into something that I don't entirely want to do? Perceptive aren't you. Well, it's true. I spend a lot of time doing that. Here in New York, of course, all states whose names begin with a vowel are a blur. I get a lot of, "So when are you off to Idaho?" and "What's in Ohio, anyway?" Good goddamn question. With all due respect, what is in Ohio? I genuinely don't know, having only been through it on my way to somewhere else. I'm going to find out, since it's one stop on the week-long road trip to Iowa that I embark on in two short weeks. It's between Ithaca and Chicago. This much I'm sure of.

The reaction I get from writers is a little different. They have actually heard of the University of Iowa, and can understand why I'd want to go there. I could have stayed here in New York and gone to NYU. One major reason I didn't choose to do that was money. In Iowa, my tuition is covered, I'm getting a paid assistantship, and the living is cheap. Another reason is reputation. Iowa is like...Iowa. My friend Moira and I have a running joke about this, which began when I was still trying to make the big decision. I'd say, "It's Iowa." and she'd say, "Yes, but...it's Iowa." She's a writer, see.

The problem is, I'm in love with New York. I think I may be genetically encoded. I think it's hopeless. So much great stuff has happened to me here, much of it through random meetings with people. I started going to a certain coffee shop when I moved to this neighborhood. One of the guys who works there runs this place called The Red Room that I've talked about in previous columns. John and I have become good friends. I do the flyers for the Room, and have permanent guest list status. I've done a play production and a play reading there, and seen a lot of great bands. When some friends of mine needed a place to play but didn't have a demo, I talked to John and he booked them based on my recommendation. I help the Red Room and the Red Room helps me. In fact, the Red Room threw me a little going-away soiree, with three bands. I supplied the gallon of iced coffee. John had one of the bands play a punked-out version of "Jet Plane" in my honor. If and when I ever get a band together, assuming that the Red Room still exists and John is still running it, I know I'll have a place to play. All this because of a random coffee shop experience.

Within the last two weeks, I was invited to write a story for a sci-

ence fiction anthology, to read my work at a party, and to attend two zine different events. In the past two months, I was invited to play live with a band (chickened out), got to meet Pete the Dishwasher, got Patti Smith to sign my copy of *Piss Factory* (see last issue) and the list goes on. I've started playing guitar again, because I've been encouraged and inspired by people I've met here. Yesterday I stopped at my favorite street bookseller's table. His name is Lou, and he conveniently sets up right outside the aforementioned coffee shop. I picked up a book and we had the typical book-buyer to book-seller conversation. "I've never read this." "It's good." "So I've heard." "Yeah, I think you'd like it." Was he trying to make a buck? No, he gave me the damn book. I protested, he insisted. I told him I'd get him back, and I will, somehow. He told me he's doing an art show in September and I was like, oh wow. Let me know. Of course I won't be here. I was going to tell him that but the words got stuck in my throat. I'm not telling you all this to show you how cool I am, or any such nonsense. I do have a point. It has been my experience that people in the arts in New York (okay, I'm going to gag on this word) network. They make an effort to collaborate and help each other more than people do in other places I've lived. You'd think that in a smaller town, people would connect more. That hasn't been true for me. I went to the same bookstore very frequently for ten years in Northampton, where I used to live, and for the most part the owners barely spoke to me. People are fond of saying that New York is cold, and everybody here is too cool and smug for their own good. Nothing could be further from the truth, in my experience. Notice, however, that I keep qualifying these statements with "in my experience" and "for me", because I don't know if everybody feels this way. Perhaps, also, if I'd lived here all my life, I wouldn't have this perspective on it.

In a lot of respects, New York gets a bad rap. "People in New York are nasty," I have often heard. Wrong. Some people are nasty. Others are just brash and sarcastic. Others still are some of the most genuinely friendly people I have met anywhere. It is true that everybody's in a big hurry (with the exception of those who are passed out drunk on the street). In general, people here are much more open and accessible than people in the small, "homey" Massachusetts town I lived in for twelve years. I used to think it was because it was a college town and therefore inundated with thousands of new people every Fall. But New Yorkers are constantly inundated with strangers of all kinds, and in my opinion, they deal with it more gracefully.

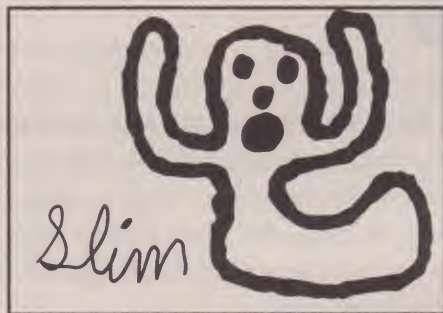
Some things I'm not going to miss: Finding barf and/or rotting piles of Chinese food (which is it this time? Hard to tell) at the door of my building, general noise pollution (today and tonight I had a wacko outside my window blowing a whistle at random intervals, for like, hours) the smell of Ninth Avenue on hot summer days. I would add "getting harassed by men on the street", but I won't, and this is why. On a fact-and-apartment-finding mission to Iowa City in June, I was standing on a streetcorner waiting for the light to change. A fat redneck with a carload of wife and kids slowed down and yelled "Show me your tits." Nice. I'll take the countless "Hey babys" on New York streets any day.

A few weeks ago I had some people literally camped on the side-

walk outside my building. They had an umbrella, a blanket, chairs, and a sign that read, "Donations needed for beer research." Shit like that, I'm going to miss.

When people say, "You're moving to Illinois? What the fuck?" I say, "Iowa. I'm keeping my apartment and my voicemail and my post office box in New York: I'm going to come back every chance I get. It's only for two years. I'll be back in January, and in the summer. Blah blah blah." I am a little cranky about the whole thing. But I'm not going to bash the Midwest. Some of the best, most twisted shit there is comes out of the Midwest. A lot of my orders for Violation Fez come from the Midwest. I'm pretty sure that the food in Iowa is going to suck but I know there's a few good record stores. I'll survive. And I can always come back, so they tell me. Those nasty New York people.

I want to thank all the people who have written me letters in response to my column. I can't tell you how nice it is just to know someone is reading it. Violation Fez #5, the Drug Issue, is out: send \$1 to Violation Fez, c/o Leah Ryan, PO Box 2228, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108.



My name is Slim and I am an alcoholic. August 16th I "celebrated" the fact that ten years have passed since the last time I drank. So I haven't gotten drunk in a decade. But I am still an alcoholic. Actually, the fact that I am an alcoholic is precisely why I haven't drank in ten years. Alcoholism is a disease, a disease that afflicts ten to twenty-five percent of the population, depending on whose numbers you believe, and punk rockers are not immune, obviously. There are a lot of alcoholics and addicts in the punk community. It is easy to think that because we are "different" from mainstream folks that our habits and problems are different too, but if you have a problem with alcohol, you have the same old disease any other alcoholic has, like maybe somebody in your family. And the way to beat the disease is the same for everybody - decide that you want to stop - come to terms with the fact that it is a disease - it is not your fault and you didn't choose to be this way, but for reasons that are beyond you, you can't control your drinking. Seek out other people who have the same problem who have managed to quit and stay quit and ask how they did it. The key is to not drink at all, which I know sounds impossible, but millions of alcoholics have done it, including a lot of punks, mostly by coming to terms with the fact that it is a disease that they cannot control and seeking out the help and advice of others who have similar experiences. If you are wor-

ried about your drinking or feel that you can't stop, I strongly urge that you seek out folks who have quit. Alcoholics Anonymous is a good place to look.



Sports is a universal thing. Every nation in the world has some kind of sport which obsesses it to ridiculous lengths. People spend, literally, billions of dollars in the U.S. alone on activities directly related to the worship of people with bigger muscles than they have.

And that's just the porn industry.

Just kidding.

Here in Chicago, the top story every night seems to be about Michael Jordan, in a way that goes beyond merely ubiquitous into the realm of the surreal. Communities spend hundreds of millions of dollars on tax abatements and stadium deals designed to either attract or keep professional sports franchises. Nashville has been trying to get an NFL franchise for years, and spent megabucks on a stadium to attract the (formerly) Houston Oilers. Oakland spent huge dollars to satisfy Al Davis and keep the Raiders in Oakland. This is money that could be spent on (say) any number of things in poverty ridden Oakland (I don't know — jobs training, the schools, enterprise zones — the list goes on); or what about the poor, rural parts of Tennessee? Do people really care about their sports teams more than their neighbors?

Yes, but people have an attraction to sports that defies all logic.

The reason, I suspect, is that sports remains one of the last vestiges of real community in the modern world. People are fragmented into smaller and smaller units, with smaller and smaller families, with less and less connection to other little families and groups. People don't know their neighbors, but if they know sports, they have something in common to speak about when they meet. They have a shared pride in their city that they don't get from interaction with their community anymore. They don't have an interest anymore.

Take, for example, me. My girlfriend and I just bought a loft here in Chicago, off in a cool neighborhood on the northwest side. We really like it because it's in an actual neighborhood, and not some random, sterile high rise. There are, presumably, neighbors there that we will meet, and, god forbid, interact with. You will notice, however, that no one in the neighborhood has any school aged children. Young people live in the city until they have children, and then they leave. Do you know why they leave? The schools are terrible. So they move to the suburbs, and create the next generation of bored, suburban kids who

grow up with nothing to do, alienated from their surroundings, who then grow up and move to the city until they have kids old enough to go to school and they move to the suburbs.

Sense a pattern here?

Anyway, no community is created by this circle of coming and going. The city never creates a community (and the schools never improve) because everyone who can afford to leaves as soon as they have kids, and only stay for a short period of time. Since the kids don't play with each other, there's no neighborhood, really — just a bunch of people living near each other. And they never stay long enough to force improvement in the schools.

Once they move to the suburbs, the creation of community is largely impossible, as the suburbs (unlike, say the town or village of earlier times) are constructed in a spread out fashion designed to create maximum isolation from your surroundings. The only real communities become either (a) religious; (b) sports; or (c) counter-culture.

Punk culture is an example of a unifying community force that exists because there is no other force holding us together. And despite the current political rhetoric, we want to feel like a part of something larger than ourselves. Having a lonely, singular, atomic existence sucks, despite the fact that the lone, individualistic american is the image du jour in today's popular culture. Things get accomplished by some superman, like something out of an Ayn Rand novel, and never by cooperation or community organization. That's unrealistic, and gives people the wrong idea about the way they should interact with their own neighbors and the responsibilities they have towards their community.

Punk is thus the equivalent of religion and sports — fine company, to be sure, but somewhat disturbing when you think about it. Punk brings people together under the putative umbrella of a common set of beliefs — its not about individuals, its about people. Lots of people. One of the big hits against religion (and sports, for that matter) is that it's the opiate of the masses, a way for people to feel good without actually getting off their asses and doing anything about the problems that beset them and oppress them. Is punk any different?

Maybe.

How many of us use the music as a way of feeling connected to others, of retreating into a shared solipsistic reverie. Punk is music about anger (which, Johnny Lydon once told us, back when he was more interesting, is an energy) but how many of us accomplish anything with that anger. I remember sitting at home listening to my Minutemen records and wondering if there was anyone like me who listened to this record and felt the way I did. However, I can't remember doing anything with my newfound sense of the world. Perhaps this just marks me as lame.

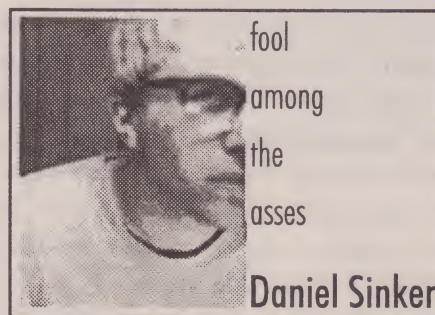
I'm willing to consider it.

I don't know, maybe the fact that I do something valuable with my law degree from time to time makes it all worthwhile. But I think that we all ought to give a thought to what makes us any different than the people who line up to wear the jerseys of some athlete. Is

our "fanaticism" any different? Does the fact that I wear a Swans shirt or a Mule shirt effectively differentiate me from some guy wearing Scottie Pippin's jersey? Are we, as fans, just the same, only with a different (equally competitive) sport?

I don't know, I've got to run. I've got to go watch the Bulls game. Or the Olympics. Or something like that.

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Standing directly behind me in the sweltering Aragon Ballroom is a gorilla.

Towering a full head above my six-foot frame and weighing in at about 270 pounds, this guy bares little resemblance to Binti-Jua, the simian who just a day before saved a three-year-old boy at Chicago's Brookfield Zoo, and saving young children is definitely not on this ape's mind. "Dude," he yells to one of his friends over—of all things—the Village People's YMCA, "when the Pistols come out, I'm going straight into the mosh pit." His cohorts chortle and "dude" him back.

As much as I would like to not be in this guy's way when he heads to the pit, I have nowhere to go. The Aragon, a cavernous space once known as the "Aragon Brawlroom" due to its wide-open dance floor and the seemingly endless chain of speed-metal bands that played their during the mid-eighties, is filled to the gills with the strangest assortment of people I've ever seen at a show. In addition to the short-on-top-long-in-back haired basketball jerseyed apes like the one in back of me, there are—as expected—hundreds of fifteen-year-old mall punks with their newly dyed mohawks almost perforating the smoke-filled air; their newly bought army jackets lined with still-shiny safety pins. These pseudo punks in the audience have acted surprisingly quickly. After all, MTV has only been playing the video for "Pretty Vacant" for a couple of weeks.

But the majority of the audience is made up of a completely unexpected and somewhat shocking group of people: your parents. Yes, most of the audience consists of what appears to be balding forty-year-old stockbrokers. Part of me wants to walk up to one of these lost souls and let them know that the Hootie & the Blowfish concert ain't tonight. But I don't. Instead, I stand back and wait, like the guy behind me, for the Pistols to take the stage.

The waiting has been tough, the last forty minutes especially, having been forced to stand through the quasi-industrial band Gravity Kills, but Sex Pistols fans are good at waiting. It's been eighteen years

since the Pistols self destructed mid-way through their first (and up until now only) tour of the United States. I'm sure there are a handful of people in this Whitman's Sampler of an audience that actually had tickets for the original Sex Pistols show in Chicago, a show that never happened; but most of the people here—myself included—discovered the Sex Pistols after they had already broken up. But one thing was sure: this was everyone's first and probably only chance to see the Sex Pistols live and in the flesh.

And finally, twenty years after they formed, and two hours after the show started, the Sex Pistols took the stage, ripping into the song "Bodies." The ape behind me flings me aside as he dives headfirst into the swarm of arms, legs and heads that make up the dance floor of the Ballroom.

It's all a nice picture, but something is terribly wrong. Everything is terribly wrong.

...

The Sex Pistols—the Sex Pistols from 1976—contributed many things to rock 'n' roll if not society as well. Among the most important was that they taught people what rock 'n' roll was all about: anger and a steady backbeat. Against almost impossible odds: arena rock, disco, and really awful PAs, the Sex Pistols were able to reinvent popular music. Sure, they didn't sound like much, Steve Jones' chord structures were simple, Paul Cook's drumming was little more than a bass drum and snare, the basslines penned by Glen Matlock (who was later replaced by Sid Vicious who couldn't play bass at all) were clunky, and Johnny Rotten's voice sounded like a mixture of dying rabbits and a buzzsaw. As Marshall McLuhen (not to be confused with Malcom McClaren) said, the medium is the message, and the Pistols' message was loud and clear: Fuck You.

Perhaps that's the problem here, these Pistols—the Sex Pistols from 1996—sound too good. One would like to blame it on the Aragon, but it's famous for being acoustically horrible. The simple fact is that these new Pistols, with their guitar flourishes, booming drums, reverbed vocals, and practiced harmonies (harmonies?!) make the Pistols sound as big and bloated as they look. Add to this an overblown stage set—made up of huge newspaper clippings from when the Sex Pistols were actually regarded as a threat to society—and a light show complete with audience spots that would blink on during the choruses, and you get band that sounded and looked much more like Def Leopard than the Sex Pistols.

It was this new band, this bloated arena rock quartet, that played the all hits of the Sex Pistols. And I do mean all the hits. In exactly an hour they ripped through fifteen songs. Considering that the only album the band released (discounting the throwaway "Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle" LP), "Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols," had only twelve songs on it, the band would have been hard pressed to play any longer.

However, lack of material wasn't the only reason the Pistols could only play for an hour. These new Pistols are, in their own words, "fat and forty." The legion of Mich Schneider Organization tour promoters working the Sex Pistols "Filthy Lucre Tour" definitely did not

prepare the Pistols for what Chicago—as well as a packed Aragon Ballroom—can serve up as far as heat is concerned.

Johnny Rotten, sporting yellow & red spiked hair and dressed in an odd silver suit—obviously cut to hide the fact that the years have been good to him, and failing miserably at it (he ended up looking something like a sausage stuffed in a mylar casing)—was sweating so much that during each song he had to towel himself off—not just wipe his face down, but actually stick a towel under his shirt and wipe down his chest, wipe under his arms, wipe everywhere.

This break every three minutes was important not just for Johnny to towel off and catch his breath, it also allowed Steve Jones to hike up his precariously balanced leopard-print stretch pants. Jones, who has always just wanted to be a rock star, has made the unfortunate mistake of deciding to dress like one. Not only is the standard stretch-pants-and-no-shirt look incredibly unflattering on his fourtysomething-and-proud body (there's definitely a little paunch along for the ride), the damn pants just won't stay put!

The pants in question, which are supposed to be skin tight, start off the show sagging a bit. This predicament is confounded further by Jones' insistence on striking all the standard guitar-hero poses: guitar slung low, legs as far apart as possible; guitar off to one side, one leg up on the stage monitor, guitar and body in flight, legs splayed out below. Unfortunately, each one of these poses stretches the pants out even further, making Jones' job of keeping them up exponentially tougher.

Midway through the Pistols' set, I found myself barely even listening to the music, I was concentrating souly on Steve Jones' pants; sometimes I felt that it was my psychokinetic power alone keeping the pants aloft. Each song would end just before the pants took the big plunge, giving Jones just seconds to grab onto the waistband and pull them up, an exercise in futility due to the fact that the act of hiking the pants up only proceeded to stretch them out further.

Had Jones only taken lessons from bassist Glen Matlock, the ultimate in understatement, he would not be in the position he was in. Matlock, as if attempting to demonstrate why he was booted out of the band in exchange for the much more crowd-pleasing (and much less talented) Sid Vicious, moved in an almost trance-like state in a three foot area for the entire show. Matlock would play the bass, take two steps back, take two steps up, sing a harmony (harmony?!) into the mic, take two steps back, and the cycle would repeat. There was no guitar posturing from Matlock, just a very concentrated two-step throughout the night. So concentrated, in fact, that a plastic beer cup—still full, mind you—came flying from the audience and smacked (with an audible "thwack!") into Matlock's head, showering him with beer. Not even looking up, Matlock continued his pacing.

As the Pistols ended their brief set, Jones turned around, revealing that he had lost the battle against his pants: his ass was hanging halfway out.

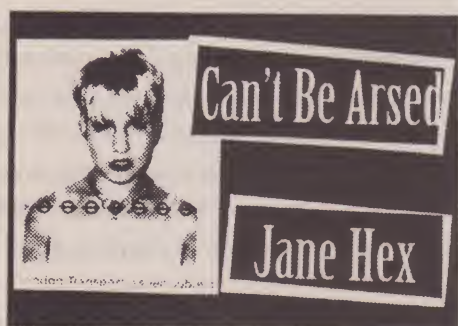
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I felt like shit as I crossed Lawrence Avenue on my way from the concert to the train. I felt this way not because the show was embar-

prisingly bad, I was expecting that, I just wasn't expecting it to affect me the way it did. Even though I rarely listen to them any more, the Sex Pistols had always meant something to me. That is, they used to mean something to me, but tonight changed all that. By attempting to claim their rightful place in rock & roll history (because underneath the "we're only doing it for the money" posturing of the band members, all of them have admitted that they're really doing it because they want to prove that they were a real band), the Sex Pistols have marred their own legacy, have pissed on their own importance, and have all but thrown away their past. "No Future" indeed.

...

Luckily, I didn't pay a dime to see the Sex Pistols. I managed to scam a press pass from the tour promoter. In fact, seeing the Sex Pistols actually made me money, as I was able to sell a bastardized version of this column to a free weekly here in town as a concert review.



The room looked totally unfamiliar. Something sickly yellow about it, dim and closed. It was supposed to be Graham's flat, somewhere in Ealing, somewhere in London, late at night after the pubs had closed. We were engaged in a quiet and strange conversation concerning what to do next. I said that I needed to catch the last train east and had to leave at once. Which tube station is the closest? Acton Town. I found myself next trudging up the Uxbridge Road, in a place bathed in strange pink and grey light, like the break of day, although I was aiming to catch the last train into London before the clock struck midnight. I don't know that I ever made it. That was the dream I had last night.



Usually, I wake up around eight-thirty. In my bedroom, the window is situated just over my pillow, and on warm summer mornings, I am awakened by a light breeze moving across my face. Or my cat pawing at the blinds so that he can see out into the yard.

Where I live, the summer has been long and hot, seeming to stretch from mid-March through now and into October, possibly. Not quite hot enough to be unbearable, but precisely the temperature one might describe as "sultry" or "distracting." Each day, I ride my bike to work. It's an uphill ride to get there, often during the warmest part of the day. After the evening has closed in and cooled the town, I can ride downhill home, the wind tangling my hair as I avoid being

struck by the moron-powered cars that slide through stop signs.

Halfway through my journey to work, I can feel the thin layer of sweat unfurling in the crevice of my back. When I arrive at the office and the air-conditioning chills my clothes, I am rewarded with a cold, wet shirt clinging to my skin. I am looking forward to Autumn.



There is a song that includes a verse which I have felt very close to of late.

"When the days seem to fall straight through you, just let them go."

A certain resignation to it, a feeling of fatigue and surrender. A feeling that I'm doing nothing with myself, a feeling that my days are becoming well-rehearsed routine, a feeling that, indeed, the days are falling right through me.

There's nothing one can really do but let them go. You cannot retrieve those days you've wasted doing nothing but procrastinating. Before I left the country, a friend warned me that once it was in my blood, the taste for travelling, the taste for other places, away from here, I would remain quietly hungry after returning home, anxious to leave again as soon as possible. Nothing is ever the same again.

Ever feel like that?



One of my favorite sequences in the film *Citizen Kane* comes early on, when one of the reporters is trying to figure out the secret of Kane's dying words. In doing so, he tells a concise but appropriate story to a colleague about the power of seemingly insignificant things, and their lasting impact.

Years ago, he had stepped off a boat and seen on the dock the most dazzling girl in all the world. Though he never saw her again, never knew her name, only saw her for an instant, not a day had gone by since that he hadn't thought of her.

The day I left for London was sweltering in Oakland. I was standing in the shade at the MacArthur BART station, waiting around for the train to Rockridge. Once there, I would walk a mile with a loaded backpack in the afternoon sun to meet the friend who was taking me to the airport. Pacing the cool pavement alongside the rails, I decided to give my back a break and have a seat. There he was on the bench.

It was months ago, so all I can remember about him now are random isolated features – his great, thick brown eyebrows, a short, shaggy bowl of dark hair with a long fringe covering the tips of his ears, stunning blue eyes, a stoic and pouting mouth. He was reading the paper. I sat right beside him.

Moments later, the Concord train came, and we boarded the same car. He sat a few rows away, thumbing through the *Guardian* and peeking over the top of the page directly at me every time I glanced his way. There was something uncanny about him. He was wearing a Parklife shirt, ironically, considering his striking resemblance to the middle brother in a certain Gallagher family (gratuitous semi-obscure reference).

I got off at the first stop. He stayed on. We looked at each other through the dirty, scratched windows as the train rolled away toward the hills. I make so much out of nothing, you know.

Naturally, I never saw him again. I thought about him on the airplane that night. I thought about him as I rode the subway through London. I was reminded of him at a show one night at the Powerhaus, watching a Liverpool band called Smaller. There, I noticed another quiet lad that I would never see again. He had spoken to me before the show, something about when the doors were to open. "Fifteen minutes," I replied hopefully. That was it. It was a very cold dusk on the Seven Sisters Road. Across from the club, someone had spray-painted "dog man star" on a clean white wall. Wasn't that the name of some crap band's album some years back? Apparently (gratuitous semi-obscure reference #2). Anyway, the boy left off and stood waiting a safe distance away.

As the show progressed, it became clear that this boy was much like me in that he was all alone at this club and not speaking with anyone. He stood in the corner, his pint positioned on the mantel of a fireplace, looking round with studied indifference. I noticed him, and did nothing, instead sitting near the back, reading a book of Irvine Welsh short stories, waiting out the inevitably terrible opening bands.

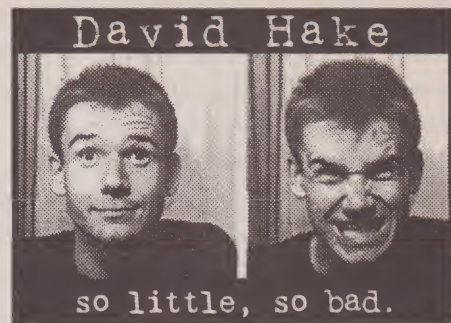
We could have made friends. It really could have happened. But as is always the case, I just couldn't find the words to say "hello." And I really wanted, needed someone to talk to in London. There was no one to be found, in a city of six million people.



My feelings for London are strange. I miss it achingly. But what exactly do I miss? The person I stayed with is someone I like, but don't miss; we were never close, he was never there for me. He was kind to let me stay at his flat, but we had little in common, it seemed. I was on my own most of the time. I don't miss the people of London, for they never even noticed me. I noticed them. I noticed them all, walking along the pavement, making furtive eye-contact on the escalator. I knew that Londoners wouldn't talk to me. Huge cities are like that, everywhere you go. It would be up to me to make the leap into conversation, and there was never time, never the impulsiveness I would need. I couldn't be bothered.

So it must be the intangibles that I miss, memories I made myself. Like parks choked with daffodils, comforting and uniform skylines, seeing Trainspotting in a practically empty cinema in Piccadilly on a rainy afternoon. The sun settling down in Surrey. The way Oxford Street looked deserted on a Sunday morning at seven a.m. Sitting on a wall across from Abbey Road Studios, reading the Melody Maker. Walking back and forth alone along the serene Camden canal. Dumb stuff like that. Like falling in love with strangers on the train, and forgetting all about them as I walked out of the station.

(PO Box 989. Berkeley, CA. 94701)



Here it is, like the body and the blood. Sequestered by these last fervent minutes, heads are bowed in the darkened recesses of pagan cowls, ticking off the countdown, bathed in a burgundy radiance, nay a dark miasma which has obscured all that is good and wonderful about this subculture, the youthful sense of angst, the five finger sandwich in the moshpit, a mountain of records and picayune paraphernalia of the underground like last rites of passage into the next life, cast about this sepulchre which marked the place of the once great, relevant and defiant punk rock. Please, please, please let this end. Let passage into the next life be imminent, and let the pretenders and lovers of conformity be cast into the most fiery hell where their RANCID records, heavy chums (hence called boyfriends), won't save them. Like every great thinker who has ever hoped for revolution (it is infinite and never-ending), I am left only with the sense that I despise everyone and everything, and that some semblance of sense and sensibility should be but moments before me. "Lethal clarity", isn't that what Nechaev called it?

As '96 nears its end they will say that Hake let poetry do his talking while he pined away his hours with garage rock faintly plucking away in the background. Like some absurd kitschy reference to Western culture falling flat on its face as the "next big thing", I like the blues and the blues like me, but you can put on that John Lee Hooker, and I'm not going to know it from R.L. BURNSIDE. So there you go, not a new Ray or Porcell in the bunch to pluck up some spent courage, where a sweet Roman nose is wanting, a new hero or champion proud in the pumped up and unconscious participation in this gay porno video, oh for hardcore my sorry son, riding out the last few years. I am surely a nineties Felix Von Havoc, wondering how I could ever be misled into believing that ANASARCA or REPUBLIC OF FREEDOM FIGHTERS or any current emo band is in any way as invigorating as BORN AGAINST or HEROIN or ECONOCHRIST in the time that these bands were making their own headway. Unlike my poor associate (hence called Flex) who was been tried and convicted by his chosen readership (never throw yourself to the wolves of emo-dom I say), I do not hope for the re-emergence of a new McPheeters or Matt Anderson, like he may hope for a renewed subscription to this year's issue of Swedish hardcore. For starters it is enough to point out that in these days of resurrection (SEX PISTOLS '96!) you sometimes regret receiving what you wished for, making a new. Let me live to see

the return of the lost art of mystery, of obscurity, of quiet certitude in cool, that this is the new thing, friends to no one, favoring no pre-existing trend known to hipsters, and I don't give a fuck, and never did, and never will. It's an appealing image, and a lie. But mystery and sincerity have their truth in short moments. Everyone moves on.

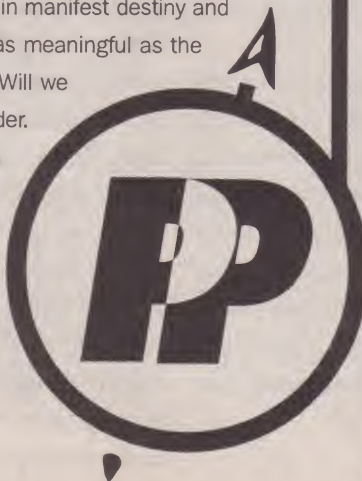
I am writing to you dear readers, my head hung close to this screen in an effort to avoid an intense amount of scrutiny. It is not typical that I will operate under the most obscene level of secrecy in order to speak my mind, get my column in on time, and avoid the taskmasters which plague my life, but as my easy access to word processors draws to a close (albeit temporarily, I hope), I am stealing back my time, and condensing another two months into some laughable diary entry for your deciphering, demons, squares at work notwithstanding.

I do not want anyone to want for me. Non serviam. I've got UPS drivers delivering me packages like you wouldn't believe (e.g., cumshot in the mouth, got it?) and you've got to stop with the crowd pleasing and see that you are thirsty. You're thirsty, and you've been thirsty for a long time, and you'll stay thirsty. You'll be up late at night, and you can listen to the SMITHS through the darkest moments and contemplate celibacy and wanton flower tossing at your muscle-bound deities, I know you've got your diary scrawling away this very moment, but nonetheless this story you're writing is called "Medicating My Pain". This business I'm talking about is less poetic than emo, it's more vile than murder because it will not die. It's a gut thing, not something you read in Punk Planet, your veritable Details of counterculture. I can't make you want it. Inspiration is a kind of epilepsy. But I can try to show you how good it is. Take over. Doing something purely for selfish motives may prove to be lacking in grace over the long haul, but it is the first page in the next era. End stagnation.

We are at the cusp of something new. Like any birthing it comes a little sooner, or it comes a little later. I do not claim to be an original writer, I can't be if I keep reiterating the same points over and over again. Consider those of us on Earth, we who are some poor, lonely, alien civilization sending out a message, the same message on a consistent, steady basis for how long? Forever? We are at the cusp of something new. Nearly certifiable evidence of bacterial life on Mars as of three hundred sixty five billion years ago has been discovered. The world will never be the same. In terms of the national budget and the "new sensibility" of '96, the knobs at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory are saying that the feminists can have their some-odd billion dollar allotment if they find three hundred sixty five billion year old feminists on a rock that fell from Mars too, otherwise let the living keep on living. There are already a battery of probes initiating a NASA renaissance as a result, ending a long era of exploratory malaise and disbelief in manifest destiny and the continued expansion. All of this will probably be as meaningful as the Cold War. Purely television. But it is something new. Will we find intelligent bacteria in the underground? I wonder.

There is a frontier in human consciousness which those of us schooled in pop culture refer to as youth cults. Kill God (in this case, punk rock). We are on the fence. Mediators. We will go one way, or the other. Forward or standing still? What is worthwhile about the present when it's already yesterday?

I do not want to die bored. Help me.



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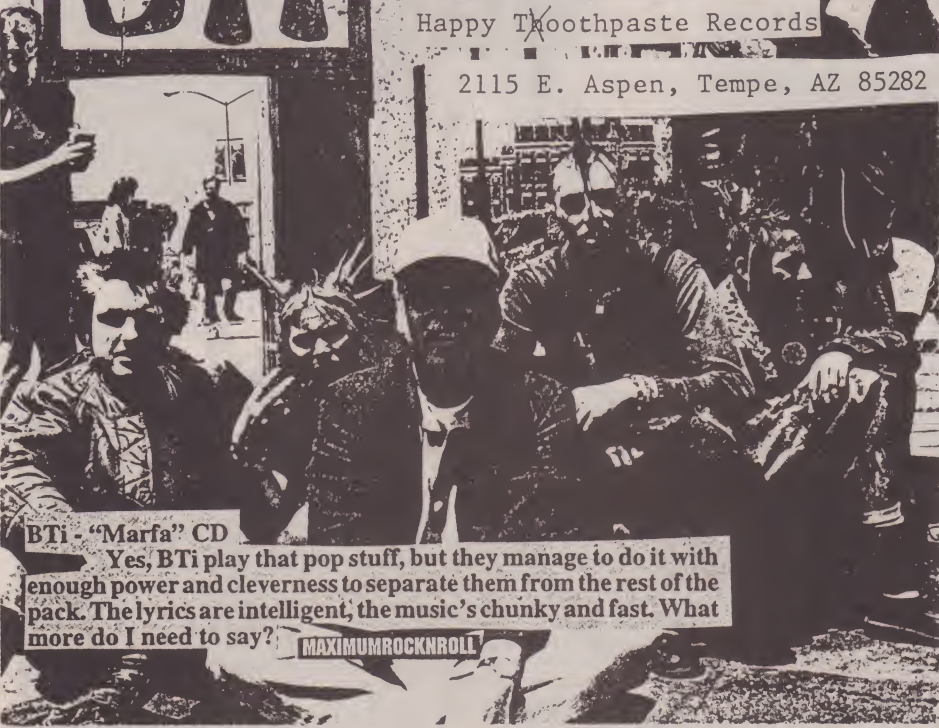
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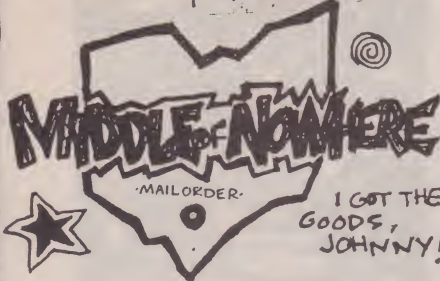
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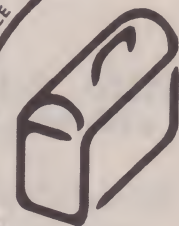
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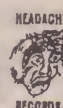
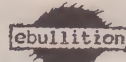
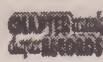
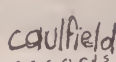
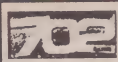


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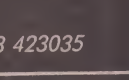
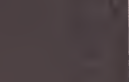
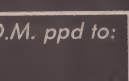
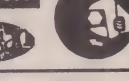
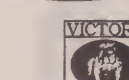
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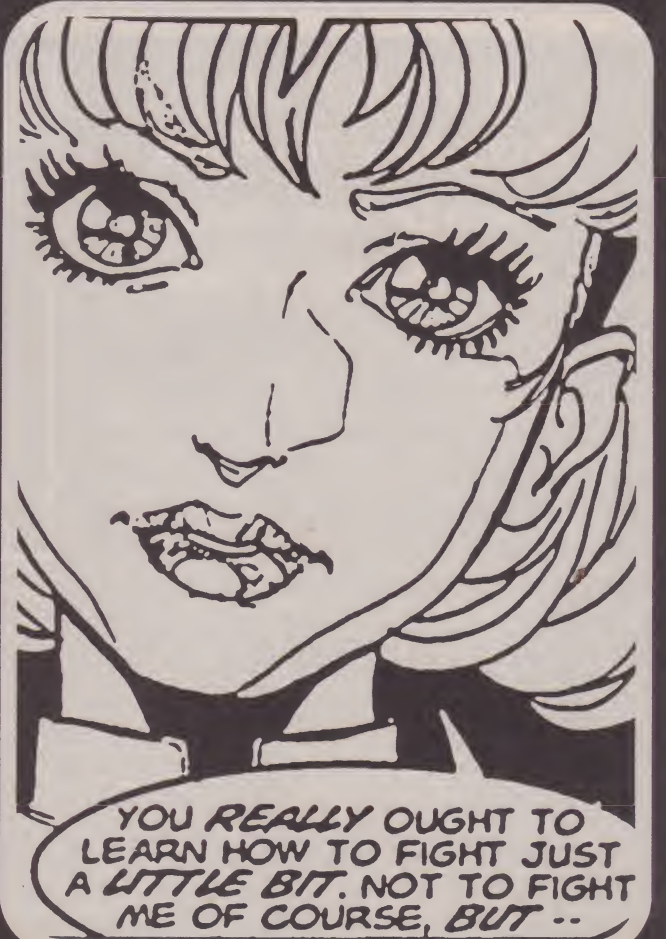


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Action Girl

SARAH DYER VERSUS THE WORLD.

You know, my friends and I like short skirts and make-up, and if that makes us bad feminists then fine, I have no problem with that.

Where did the Action Girl Comic book come from?

I had a lot of motivations that kind of just all combined and the comic seemed to answer all these things that I was trying to do. One thing was that I wanted an outlet for my work and my friend Elizabeth Watson's work and we had been talking about trying to do some kind of comic together but neither of us had the time to do a comic on any kind of regular basis. If we were doing it ourselves it would come about every two years! At the same time I was doing the Action Girl newsletter and I was getting a lot of mini comics from women and none of them were being published anywhere, in any of the small press anthologies or anything. I thought they were just as good as any of the people being published, so I was walking around wondering why there wasn't some anthology publishing all these new people. Also, because of the action girl newsletter I get huge volumes of mail from girls—14, 15, 16—who were really interested in comics, but virtually all alternative comics are "mature readers" only, so most comic stores won't sell them to you if you're not 18 years old. I thought that also that was a bad thing. And the other factor was that I felt like alternative comics in general—this is a major generalization—seemed to be by a different generation of creators. I felt that the stories weren't really relevant to my life. There were no stories about things that had ever happened in my life—these were not people who liked Star Wars and went to punk shows. So all these things were just running around in my head, so at some

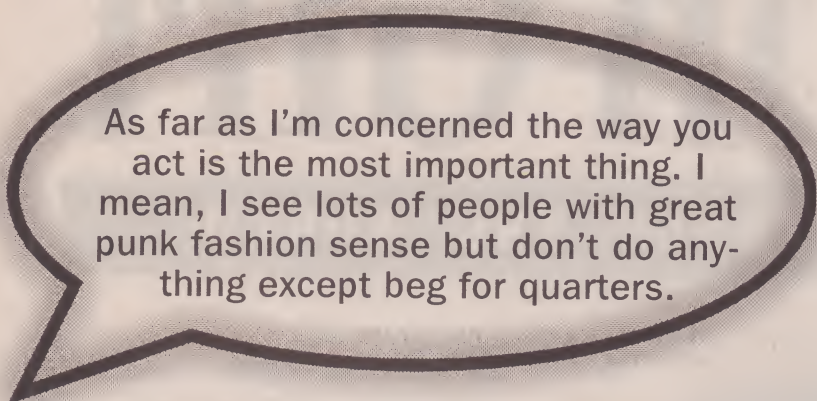
point I just felt like, "Oh, fine—I'll do it then." So, Action Girl is trying to address all of these things at the same time.

I think it's kind of interesting that you're reaching a greater audience from a by-product of the newsletter.

It's kind of a convoluted path because the newsletter started from me doing a music zine, which I still sort of do a semi-annual basis, which was Mad Planet. I worked on a zine before that called No Idea years ago and had a lot of problems with that zine

because I wasn't the only person working on the zine and the time there were so few women doing zines, or working on zines that whenever I would speak with people on the phone they would constantly assume I was just someone's girlfriend or was making a phone call for somebody's boyfriend when I was actually co-editing and writing a lot of the material! I found that frustrating so I started Mad Planet thinking "All right, all do this all by myself, that way people will have to realize that I'm the editor and the writer because no one will have worked on this zine except for me." It actually didn't work completely because I would get reviews of the zine and they would find the guy with a one page comic in my zine and assume he was the editor. It's not like I don't like zines that guys do because I read just as many of them, but I started just casually looking to see how many other girls were doing zines, and this was in 1992, and at the time there were virtually none, I went through several months worth of reviews and found something like 12 zines by women. I actually went overseas, the one time in my life, and bought this magazine in England called Girlfrenzy—it's an all female publication—and they had reviewed all these zines by women in the US that I had never heard of. I thought that was ridiculous, why couldn't I find those zines on my own? At that time Factsheet Five wasn't coming out, it was that time when it wasn't coming out for about two years. So that's why I started the newsletter; I figured I would be able to get infor-

mation about these zines, if I started doing it then other people would let me know about other zines and I could try and network the girls who were doing zines. Of course, within a year and a half, there were hundred and hundred of girls doing zines. So, that's how the newsletter got started, and through the newsletter I got hooked with all these girls doing mini-comics, and I was actually doing these one page comics that were going into Mad Planet, so everything just kind of weaved itself together.



As far as I'm concerned the way you act is the most important thing. I mean, I see lots of people with great punk fashion sense but don't do anything except beg for quarters.

So it's very similar to the way the Action Girl comic is trying to network together girls in comics.

Yeah, it's definitely an outgrowth of a lot of the same ideas. The biggest difference is that with the Action Girl newsletter I wanted guys to be able to find zines by women, because guys are just as interested in reading things written by girls as girls are, but at the same time it was primarily for girls to network, while with the comic I'm really concerned that it be completely accessible to guys as well. That's another problem I find I find with comics that are "women's" comics is, that they really tend to alienate men. That makes no sense. If you're trying to say this is my female viewpoint and it's equally valid, I would think that the whole point of that is to explain a few issues to men, and if you alienate them from reading your comic, you just have no point. So the comic is actually more concerned with being accessible to men as well and to people who aren't even into alternative comics, so that it doesn't become some elitist thing that only 200 people are going to get.

Would you like to bring the comic out more often then, instead of just a quarterly?

Doing it quarterly is killing me! I'm trying to get back on top of my other projects and I do actually try to work for a living. I'm also trying to do more of my own work now, because originally I figured that I would be able to do a piece every issue having no idea that doing it quarterly would take up all of my available time, and it's only been in the last couple of issue that I've been able to start doing work again for the comic.

That's one of the ironies; because of the workload you have in putting together the comic, you don't get to have your work appear more regularly-in your own comic!

I always intended to do more stuff and I wanted to do more of my autobiographical stuff, too, and it got to the point where I had to start reprinting stuff I had done from mini-comics because there was no time to do work. I took it to Slave Labor Graphics and they publish it for me because if I'd completely die if I had to publish it and put it out. This way it's like a zine except someone is paying the printing bills.

When you brought Action Girl to SLG what was the reception for a

girls-only comic?

They hadn't thought in terms of an all girl anthology, but the thing that made them really enthusiastic about it was that it was an all-ages book, without being a kids book. They're really trying to bring out books that you could consider all-ages and get away from this "mature readers" thing in the small press. Not only does it prevent people under eighteen from buying the book, but a lot of the time there is no need for that label. A lot of titles seem to include all this graphic sex and violence just because they feel the need to necessitate the "mature readers" tag.

It's come to the point where that label is there just to cue adults into thinking that makes it "mature."

Yeah, "Oh look, people are naked; it's 'adult.'" So along with Action Girl, Slave Labor is trying to put a whole line of books that would be "all-ages" that wouldn't offend people, but would still be interesting to adults.

It's kind of a reversal of the way that comics in the eighties tried to become more "adult," with the proliferation of all the "dark" and

"gritty" books being published. I can see the immediate profit that could come from publishing a book that appeals to an adult audience, but doesn't exclude the dollars of the under-age audience as well, but I would like to think that a company like Slave Labor is trying to foster an interest in comics with a younger generation. You bill your book as being "all-ages," which reminds me a lot of the way that punk shows are billed.

I actually have trouble explaining what I mean by that. I'll get letters from people saying "How can you call that book 'all-ages?'" I wouldn't let my eight-year-old brother read that." Having put on punk shows in VFW halls for years, when I say "all-ages" I mean like a Fugazi show, so sometimes I have to kind of explain it a little a bit better, that "all-ages" means *suitable* for all-ages, but not exactly *for* children.

So what's the point at which you draw the line as far as what's exceptable in an "all-ages" book?

Generally, to be safe, I follow the distributors guidelines, which is no explicit language—which I interpret as not using the "F" or "C" words—and no graphic sex or nudity; that's about their guidelines. You can decapitate someone in a comic and it's still not a mature readers book by their guidelines, although I try to draw the line at decapitation. As far as the language thing goes, it's kind of silly that you can say the word "frag" but you can't say "fuck" when everyone knows it's the same thing.

I know that there is the assumption that comics about girls aren't going to sell.

Yeah, the comics industry is essentially fueled by fourteen-year-old boys and guys who work in the industry because they've been fans since they were fourteen. A lot of the behavior is just imbecilic. I mean, I've got one friend who works in the mainstream comics industry as an illustrator and she has had portfolio reviews where a guy flips through her portfolio and then gives her his hotel key. Just being in the comic industry is difficult because when you go to a convention you can just feel all these people saying, "Look, over there: it's a girl!"

Like some kind of whacked-out frat party for the socially retarded.

The small press booths are much better, but it's got its own problems. So many networks are just small groups of friends, and I've found that either you've got the network of guys who had one or two female friends who they decided were cool, or the pre-existing network of women in the comics industry that are all older and have known each other since the 70's and really do not see any need to publish anyone else. I can't quote it because I don't remember it verbatim, but there was an article in a comics magazine I was interviewed for and one of the women actually said that she had done her work to get into the comics industry so she didn't feel the need to help out any other women.

That seems to go against the whole idea of an independent comics network.

That was the thing that really shocked me when I started getting mini-comics from women that were as professional as any small-press comic, and no one was publishing them at all. You'd think at least that these women's comics groups would be pursuing these people but they weren't. And then of course you have the problem of retailers thinking that women books won't sell because girls don't come into the store, but then girls don't come into the store because there are no books for them. One of the problems is that all little kids read comics—Archie, Ninja Turtles, Sonic the Hedgehog—but when kids get a little bit older, the boys can move on to the super-hero stuff which is for them, but there is nothing for a girl who is in her pre-to-early teens at all, you totally lose them at that age and they never come back. One thing that I never understood is when you go to comic book store there is always this huge Spider-Man or Batman painting on the window; who doesn't know that a comic store carries Spider-Man? Why promote the stuff that everyone knows you have? This one store put a huge poster in their window for Barbie comics, which has since been cancelled, and little girls and their moms would come in off the street because they saw Barbie in the window. They'd come in and say "Barbie comics, they have Barbie comics? I didn't know about this." And the kid looking for Spider-Man is going to come in regardless of a Barbie poster.

How did the riot grrl explosion effect your newsletter?

Action Girl started about the same time riot grrl did, so everything was already in place when riot grrl hit, so people constantly asked about riot grrl and where I fit in. I saw riot grrl as it's own separate group but part of an overall movement of people trying to do things pro-girl.

While Action Girl tended to be a little bit more all-inclusive and boy-friendly, riot grrl sometimes came across as exclusionary.

I would never go out of my way to disassociate myself with riot grrl, but I would never have considered myself a riot grrl. One thing I thought was a problem was that I would get letters from these girls age 14-15, the kind of letters from girls who are trying to figure things out for themselves, who were saying that they believe in 'for girls' or 'empowering girls' but they would always say they couldn't be a riot grrl or a feminist because they had a boyfriend or because they wore make-up. I thought this was a problem because that was the way the media portrayed it and that was the way people involved in those groups acted, and they would totally alienate all these girls from being involved and a lot of girls would get turned off from doing anything pro-girl because they felt that oh if I'm going to be pro-girl I have not shave my legs, not wear make-up and

become a vegetarian. I'm sure there many girls who had something to contribute who got turned off. Actually, I was told that I'm a bad feminist because some of the characters in Action Girl are young and cute.

I was wondering how many people chastised you for that.

Yeah, this guy was completely off base, complaining that the characters were made to look like they were 16, so I was like, "Well, they are 16, didn't you read it?" An he said that the girls were wearing school girl uniforms because of the Japanese school-girl uniform fetish, so some of his argument were just completely bizarre. I never said this was a feminist comic, nor did I ever say that I was a feminist. This kind of attitude is why so many women under thirty have nothing to do with feminism. You know, my friends and I like short skirts and make-up, and if that makes us bad feminists then fine, I have no problem with that.

It's that idea that if you're a real feminist, you'll destroy all articles of clothing that make you resemble a woman.

I actually met at the San Diego ComiCon last year a woman who worked for Susan Falludi who was talking to me about how there is a growing a movement of neo-feminism because there are all these women who are so sick and tired of feeling that your politics and your apparel have to go hand-in-hand, which is ridiculous! It's like that weird fashion-ism in punk where if you don't look punk then you don't have any credibility, no matter how you can act, which is another thing which has always irritated me beyond belief.

There has to be some superficial presentation in order to be legit.

As far I'm concerned the way you act is the most important thing. If you're doing some incredible DIY thing but you're sporting the wardrobe by GAP, then fine. I mean, I see lots of people with great punk-fashion sense but don't do anything except beg for quarters!

Even though you have one of the most guy-friendly "girl-books," do you get any flack from people feeling slighted for not being included?

I actually haven't have anyone get upset over the comic, and over the four years that I've done the newsletter I've gotten two letters from people complaining, one from a guy one from a girl. The girl who had sent me stuff actually wrote back and said she didn't want to be associated with anything that was exclusive. The one guy was actually really upset because I wouldn't review his zine. I always try to explain it in terms like, you wouldn't be upset if Maximum Rock&Roll didn't review your country album, so don't be upset with me if I don't review your zine, there other places for you to get reviewed.

Everything is exclusive in its own sense just by having guidelines or an editorial policy.

Everyone has to have a set of limits, otherwise you could never get anything done because you'd always be making decisions over what was and wasn't suitable all the time. There is no zine that covers every form of music, and if there was I don't think anyone would read it!



You may know Cheesecake, an all girl/all lesbian Boston band, from their appearance on the "Stars Kill Rock" compilation, or from their 7" on their own label, Fistful. They've just released a Full Length. If you haven't checked them out yet, you really should cuz they'll be huge punk rock stars any day now. A good Cheesecake recipe consists of Teresa Basilio, Guitar; Lara Comstock, guitar and drums; Coleen Nagle, guitar; and Caitlin Bermingham, Bass. This cheesecake cooked up by Meredith Hart and Amanda St. John.

Punk Planet: What do you think about being lumped in with riot grrrl?

Colleen Nagle: It gets me really upset... really angry.

Lara: Well, its just so old, and, we never were members of riot grrrl. We played shows for them and stuff, but.... whatever, you know?

Teresa: It's an easy label that people use for women in music. Women have been in music for as long as men have, but its like in order for people to understand things, they have to label them. Its just a way for them to label us without actually listening to what we're saying.

CN: Its just case in point that people still aren't listening to women's music. And if they think our music is riot grrrl than its obvious that they're not listening.

PP: Well, if you were going to put a label on your band, what do you think would be a good one?

L: What did we think of? Latina Gaelic?

T: Gaelic as in gay-lick.
(laughs)

T: No-it's super grungy noise buzz that will suck you!

Caitlin Bermingham: That was from a letter we got.

T: From Japan. And he wrote, "your super grungy noise buzz sucked me." **(laughs)**

PP: What did you guys listen to when you were like, 5?

T: Avengers of Go-Go, the Carpenters... oh, I listened to a lot of Julio Iglacious.

CB: Beatles. My parents had a huge Beatles collection.

L: Um, church music?

CN: I listened to a lot of church music too.

CB: I listened to Sesame Street music. I had a couple of Sesame Street albums.

PP: OK, so what are you into now?

CB: Same thing! **(laughs)**

PP: What was your high school like?

L: High School? Oh no!

T: Alright, well, I went to high school in Florida and it was a catholic high school. That's all I need to say about it. It was totally horrific. It was evil. It was hell.

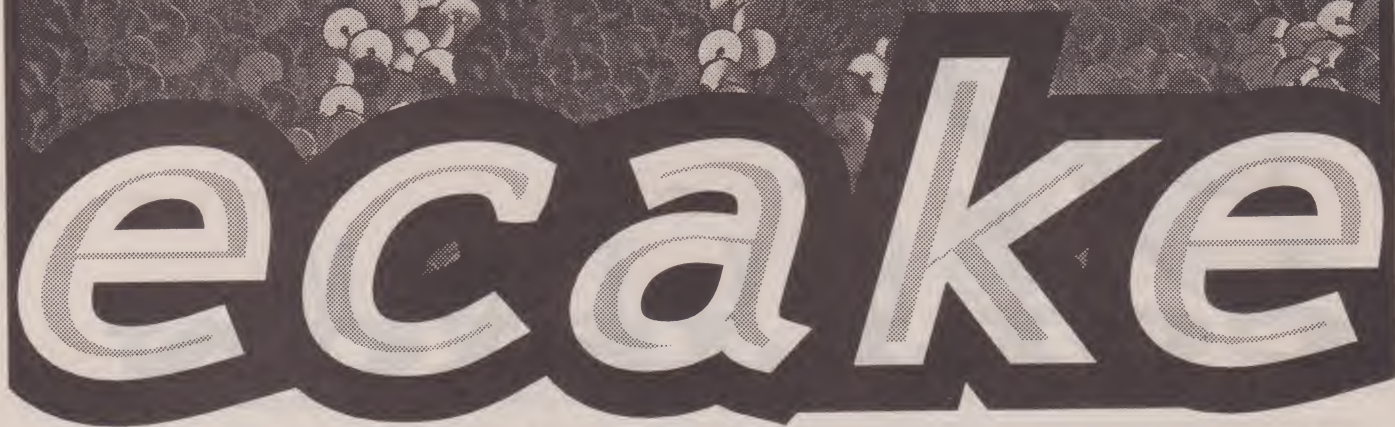
L: Well, I was a cheerleader... **(laughs)**

T: She was a cheerleader. She was THAT kind of high school girl.

CN: I went to a private high school. I was a jock and a computer nerd.

PP: What do you think of punk being all cool and....

L: Mainstream? Well, seeing that I am in Green Day, I real-



eecake

ly can't say too much about it. **(laughs)**

T: This is Billie. By the way, Billie's sitting in with us when Lara's out sick. [pause] Um, what do I think about it? Well... it's kind of dying out. There was this big surge of commercial, "alternative" music, but it's dying. It's just consumer culture. It'll be bottled up and then they'll find something else to like.

CN: I just think it really sucks that musicians have to basically sell their souls and work with these big corporations. There's not enough going on independently. There's a really no competition- it's like *either* major labels or struggle on your own. There's no in- betweens, so there's less choice, and less real political stuff being woven into music. I think it's a huge loss, and it's what's lost by punk being absorbed into the mainstream.

PP: What about Hole getting big, or bands like that that have female singers? Do you think that 's doing anything to change how people think?

L: In a way, yes, because I remember when I was young and being really inspired by women, the Pretenders or something like that. That was the only access I had to women singers, which was really mainstream.

CB: But by the time that they get that big, their music is just so fucking washed out.

T: But Hole... They have a really strong, vocal woman speaking, but does that make any difference? It's so hard to tell.

CB: I think so. Stuff I read about, I think a lot of people are really inspired by her.

T: I don't know though... I guess the message is diffused whatever she's trying to say is lost because it's so mass marketed.

CB: People aren't listening to it, so they're just singing along.

PP: OK, this is from our friend Jason. We told him to give us a question, and he said, "do you guys suck?" **(laughs)**

CN: Yes!

T: In all the positive ways that you could say that, yea.

L: I like to suck on Tess sometimes!

T: You wish honey! Suck on this!

Write Cheesecake/Fistful Records at: PO' 390210,
Cambridge MA, 02139-0003

I'd like a "C" please

There are two "C's"

I'd like to solve the puzzle Pat.

RHYTHM COLLISION

In April, Rhythm Collision toured the U.S and Eastern Canada promoting their excellent new LP/CD *Clobberer!* They have developed their own distinctive sound and consistently produce tunes that are catchy as heck. On April 23rd, near the end of their four-week tour, I caught up with them prior to their gig in Toronto, that oft-frozen Canadian metropolis where it is far too bloody cold for criminals to operate. Despite the bone-chilling temperatures (at least for three guys for whom snow was merely a vague rumor), undoubtedly the band found the safe city of Toronto to be a much needed respite from the mud slides, brush fires, earthquakes, freeway shootings, race riots, O.J. Simpson, the L.A. Kings, and police and border patrol beatings, not to mention the many other stomach-churning horrors that are part of everyday life in greater Los Angeles. Rhythm Collision are: Harlan Margolis - guitar, lead vocals; Corey Baim - bass, vocals; Sean Donnelly - drums, vocals. Also present were friends Randy and Andrew. Interview by Rick Spithoff

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How is the tour going so far?

C: Really good.

In about a month from now you're going off to Europe. Are you doing anything different from your last tour of Europe two years ago? Are you hitting the same cities?

H: We're pretty much hitting the same places except we might go to Ireland and Scotland. It's pretty much the continent and just a little bit of the U.K.

Did you find it a lot easier to tour Europe than North America because all the cities are close together?

H: Yeah, the drive's better, that's for sure. But then there's other things like different languages and different currencies, but the drive, that's the key because in the U.S. it's so far between cities.

Soon after that you're off to Australia, so you're spending the better part of five months just touring, and (to Corey) you just got married.

C: Yeah, my wife's not very happy about that.

A: She's not happy she got married to you?

C: (laughs) But basically I figure I gotta do it now. I'm not gonna do this when I'm 35 or 40 or whatever. I can always go back to work and settle down, so I might as well travel while I can.

Do you know if you have a good following in Australia?

H: There's a guy who runs a distribution called Spiral Objective which is the only punk and independent distributor there. Because through other distributors North American CDs are like \$25 or more, he started this thing about four years ago. And I've known him for a long time so he's always been distributing our stuff, and our stuff does really well with him. He's gonna do about ten shows for us over two weeks, and we know we'll definitely cover our costs. We'll make some money so I think it should be a pretty good tour.

I read that you guys were flown up to Alaska to play with a couple other bands, all expenses paid. What was that about?

H: We did the same thing with Hawaii before we went on this tour. Some guy called us up and asked if we wanted to play Alaska. From the first time he called me 'til we set it up it was six or seven months later, but I said "just send us the tickets and we're there". So we finally did it. It was cool; it was a place I never thought I'd get to play. It's even colder than Canada.

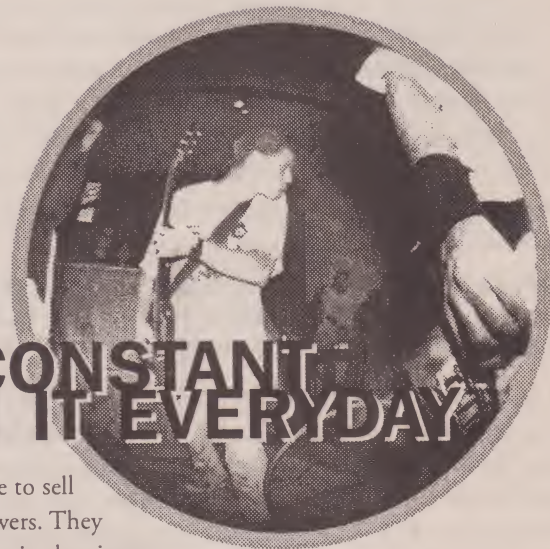
A: Do they live in igloos like we do up here?

H: (laughs) Yeah, the show was in an igloo, it was crazy. It was like a really big igloo.

C: There were penguins walking around and polar bears.

H: The club was called The Big Igloo.

BEING IN A BAND IS A CONSTANT STRUGGLE TO STAY IN IT EVERY DAY



C: Actually, we're trying to play in every state and Alaska was one of the ones we hadn't played, so we had to play there.

What are you guys doing for day jobs these days that allows you to go on tour for so long? (to Corey) You were working at a bank a few years ago.

C: I was working at a mortgage and banking firm, but now with my wife, she's a graphic designer, we have our own company, so basically I can leave when I want, which is nice.

S: I work for two talent agencies in Beverley Hills. I just drive around and messenger stuff.

So you mean, if I want to be a movie star I just come to you?

S: Talk to me and I'll just pass you on to someone. I definitely have the right connections. My job isn't prestigious, I'm the low toady in the agency.

H: I do nothing, I just do the band right now.

Do you get help with Collision Records from anybody else?

H: No, I do it myself.

There was about a three year lapse between the second and third LP. Was that mainly because of financing?

C: We toured a lot. One year we toured like the whole year. We went to Europe and did the states twice.

H: We became Buddhist monks for a year too. That was kind of a detour. I regret that.

Weren't you guys also Hare Krishnas, into that Krishnacore for a while? I heard you guys were Shelter wannabes for a while.

H: We did the airport thing for a while. It didn't work out.

C: We weren't making enough cash.

H: You have to sell enough flowers. They start you out in the airport

and if you can get past that then you know you're in.

S: I started out selling Gucci watches in the subway in New York.

When you write songs do you tend to go through brainstorming sessions a few weeks before going into the studio or do you write songs fairly regularly?

H: It's not a brainstorming thing. We just write one song at a time as it comes through, and try not to force it. I keep a tape recorder around and when I think of something I just record it.

A recurring theme in some of your songs is about not really fitting into the work world.

H: (raises hand and laughs) Guilty.

You're obviously drawing from your own experiences. With your history degree, afterwards you were probably wondering what you were going to do with yourself.

H: Pretty much like everybody else.

It's that Generation X thing.

H: Totally. I think that's what a lot of people can relate to. Being in a band is a constant struggle to stay in it every day. I don't know if I'll be doing it a month from now. It's always a struggle to get enough out of it to justify yourself doing it financially and other ways too, with all the pres-

IT'S HARD WRITING LYRICS BECAUSE EVERYTHING'S BEEN WRITTEN BEFORE AND YOU DON'T WANT TO USE CLICHES.

sures around you to start making enough money to pay the bills and stuff. I think that's why a lot of bands are short-lived. You gotta be either independently wealthy or like a street person. Every tour we go on, if we have a job we have to either quit it or get a job that we can quit and go back to. For every tour it's like that. That's pretty chancey, you know. And if you're not making much money it's pretty hard doing that and going back finding a new job, then you start burning all your bridges.

On all your albums, not only have you changed your sound, but your style of lyrics too. Is that something you feel you have to do to keep interested in it?

H: I don't know. I think I just maybe got a little better at it. I hate writing the lyrics. It's the thing I do last. It's hard writing lyrics because everything's been written before and you don't want to use cliches. It's really hard to find a way around that. I write the songs first and then at the last minute before going into the studio I'll do the lyrics. I was pretty happy with Clobberer! I came up with some of my best stuff and I was pretty happy with it. But other times I'll just ask Corey if he can write the lyrics for this song. I hate writing lyrics because a lot of our songs are about the same things, just different songs. It's difficult coming up with new topics. We're not going to write songs about stuff we don't know anything about and we're not a political band. We're not going to write about the political crisis in Chechnya or something, because it's not what we're really about. I'll just write about things that affect me, my experiences, or things that are kind of funny, but hopefully not throwaway stupid lyrics.

As for the business aspects of the band, is your relationship with Dr. Strange the same where you split costs 50/50?

C: Not on this one, we're recording the songs ourselves. We got a little bit of business to work out with him. I mean it's a Dr. Strange release because it's a lot easier. With the 50/50 stuff it was always a headache to figure out who put more cost into it, who gets what, and what the split point is.

H: It's just a headache with bookkeeping. He insisted that we do it this way, so we did.

How do you divide distribution responsibilities with Dr. Strange?



H: He does it all. That's the main benefit of being on a label like that. I never did enough with Collision to get good distribution. The only way to get really good distribution is to put out good bands of course, but you have to do it consistently so that distributors are going to pay you because they want the next release you're putting out. But if you just put something out once every two years or something they're going to rip you off because they don't have to pay you to get the next release. With Dr. Strange, he has good distribution through Mordam, so that's what helps his label and the bands on his label a lot more than a lot of other labels out there. You can find his stuff in pretty much all the stores. That's key when you're in a band. You want people to find it.

C: Plus advertising. He's really built up a network of advertisements everywhere. If we're doing it, well we could afford a couple maybe.

Do you have any ambitions for Collision Records, any interest in signing other bands?

H: I thought about it if I had enough money this year, but it's really a matter of time. I do have some money, but it's time. If we're on tour all the time how can I possibly run the label decently. It would just be me.

Youth Brigade sort of does that.

H: Yeah, I don't know how they do it. Maybe when I'm done with the band I'll do it, but there's so many labels now it's kind of disturbing for me because everyone and their mother is starting a label. Every kid who wants to start a label can put out a comp. I think it's a little over-saturated right now. I think if I had continued with it a couple years ago. That was the idea by doing the splits with Dr. Strange, but with the bookkeeping it didn't work out. Maybe when I'm done, if things are still going good.

You've been raising some funds for your friend in war-torn former Yugoslavia with that single ("Holiday"). Have you heard anything lately from him? Has his situation improved?

H: Actually, I have a letter right here that I got from him before we left on tour. He got all the money we sent him and the situation is a little better there, but it sounds like he's had a complete mental breakdown. I hadn't heard anything from him during the whole Peace Accord thing, so I was kind of optimistic, but things really haven't changed. It may be a little better, but it's a pretty sad situation.

So do you get the impression that he's given up on ever getting out of that country?

H: Pretty much, yeah. He's lost all his friends, all his possessions.

C: His father.

H: I don't know. It was good for us to do that. I feel good that we did it and everything. The letters are always so depressing and I feel weird trying always to write him peppy letters and try to give him a pep talk. But he just wants to see bands, that's all he wants. He wants to have what we have and be into music. Maybe one day.

Okay, it's kind of suspicious that you guys are going off to tour Europe at the same time the Sex Pistols are having their reunion tour. They're starting off in Europe.

H: I guess you found out. The truth is we're the backing band for Johnny Rotten on this tour. Well, let's see. Sid's dead. Isn't Paul Cook in jail? And Steve Jones is a metal guy, so it's us and Johnny Rotten.

Then you guys are going to call yourselves the Rhythm Pistols?

H: It's Sex Collision. You gotta get 'sex' in there because more people come to the shows. Sex sells in America.

Okay, so we got an exclusive. Thanks a lot guys.

H: (to Sean) Don't you have any interesting tour stories to tell?

R: Anything naughty? Drunken binges?

Any of you guys get left behind somewhere?

S: I got left behind in Europe. They left me behind in some city in Germany. They went off to the next city.

H: I didn't think we'd see him again.

S: I had no money; I was being shown around the city by this girl and when I got back the driver had already left. I got back to the old club. I was standing in the snow for four hours in shorts and one long sleeve shirt on, waited for the club owner to get back, went inside and found my jacket and found an old tour slip so I had the city, but the city was big, it was like Toronto, and we ended up playing in a suburb. So I'm trying to ask all these people where is this and where is that, but the club ended up changing it's name since the pamphlet was printed. So I asked "where's Club Molson?". "I



don't Know". So I'm freaking. It's been like nine hours since I started this trek. I started at 9:00 in the morning and now it's 6:00 at night. So finally around 7:00 I went to the police. I said "I'm from America, I play in a band and I gotta find this club; we're playing now". Somehow they got through and found out it was in some suburb called Menedde(?) or something like that. They drove me to the club around 9:30, and as I'm walking up the steps of the club, I'm just boiling, I'm ready to strangle our driver. I see Corey. I'm screaming "what the fuck!" I was totally left in a town in a country I had no idea what I was doing. I couldn't even believe I found them.

C: We also got food poisoned in Germany. That was a fun experience. Our band, the band we were with, the drivers; we were out for a good solid 24 hours puking.

R: Diarrhea?

C: Oh, the whole bit.

What did you guys eat?

C: Some vegetable rice.

S: It was the pesticides that did it.

H: A place called Borchon(?), Germany. Don't ever go there. It was like the worst 48 hours of my life. The show was fucking awful. We played in this place that was like a barn with dirt on the floor. It was super cold inside and we had to play with three grindcore bands that were complete noise. It was like a cool vegetarian thing, but then it turned out we got food poisoning from pesticides.

So were you guys like shoegazers on stage?

H: Oh no, it wasn't until after. So we were just pretty much puking everything out. There was nothing left inside us for like 48 hours.

**WE'RE NOT GOING TO WRITE SONGS
ABOUT STUFF WE DON'T KNOW
ANYTHING ABOUT AND
WE'RE NOT A POLITICAL BAND.**

RICHARD



- At the peak of his popularity he was receiving 12,000 fan letters per month.

- Has admitted a fondness for Carol Burnett and her "wildest spaghetti in the world."

- Dated Linda Evans, Suzanne Pleshette, and many many other Hollywood starlets.

- Starred with Sharon Stone and James Earl Jones in "Allan Quartermain and the Lost City of Gold" in 1987. A universally panned film.

- Starred in James Clavell's T.V. adaptation of Shogun as Pilot Blackthorne.

- Starred in Colleen McCollough's heartstopping love story "The Thorn Birds" as Father Ralph de Briscassart.

- Believes the fame he gained from his stint as T.V.'s Dr. Kildare has since gone the way of it's supporters. "I think most people who watched it are dead."

- Wasn't always the damn mini-series hunk you see today. He wore braces as a child and found that "every lunch was an adventure."

- Went to college with "Convoy" star Kris Kristofferson. Said of school, "I hated school. I hated sports. I hated anything anyone told me to do."

- His fan base early on was largely composed of pre-pubescent girls. Cuz he was such a damn mini-series hunk. A fan, since grown up, confessed "I learned how to kiss by using a poster of Richard Chamberlain. I kissed his lips off."

Chamberlain

No band that has enjoyed even a marginal level of popularity or visibility is without its critics and for Chamberlain there have been many. The detractors have been many and their critics strong, which is odd for such a new band. But their newness is by name only. Chamberlain has been around for some time, first causing trouble under the name Split Lip. The rumor mongers have been up to no good when it comes to the identity switch, so what's really behind the name change? Curtis Mead, the bassist for Chamberlain, leans back and forces down a laugh. **"You mean besides the obvious?"** OK, so what's the obvious? **"The obvious being that we were about fifteen when we named it [Split Lip] and it was a joke. The obvious being that it was a horrible name."** He allows himself that laugh. **"Every time we released something we would think about changing it. The music just grew and we grew and the name stayed the same."** He pauses. **"I'm thinking about changing it yearly, but no one else likes the idea."**

A lot of people have assumed that the name was changed to meet recording industry expectations, in an effort to please interested majors. Whether or not this played any role at all in the decision is a subject of uncertainty for Curtis. **"I don't know [how much it was a factor] ... The biggest factor was that people we respected were telling me straight up that they never would have listened to our records if it wasn't forced on them. You could say that they should be open minded, but if I saw a band named ..."** He can't bring himself to even utter it anymore, **"... that name ... I probably wouldn't have listened to them either. After enough of those comments from people you really respect, what's the point? Why not have more of an ambiguous name and not have that name speak for us as loudly as that name did?"**

Even before the name change, charges of "rock stardom" have haunted the band. When members of the band decided to stop adhering to their straight edge beliefs, or appeared to lose concern over political issues like animal rights, the "sellout" label was quickly and often heartlessly attached. Catalyst fanzine published a taunting editorial alongside a dated interview with the group, calling them out for their apparent contradictions. David or Curtis would say they were fighting to keep the band "hard-core", Kurt Catalyst would point out that they were negotiating with the organizers of Lollapalooza. I myself became embittered with the band and felt a little snubbed when Split Lip declined to attend an animal rights benefit show they asked me to organize and had agreed to play. All of this culminated at a show with Doghouse label mates Colossus Of The Fall, where Kurt Catalyst showed up with his straight edge vegan posse in tow, heckling the stage from the floor. Curtis affixed a sign that read "sellout" onto his bass cabinet. Finally things were talked out and resolved. But the problems with their image as egotistical attention hounds persisted. Nevertheless, the band moved on to bigger and increasingly bolder musical horizons, releasing their finest and most polished work- the Fate's Got A Driver LP on Doghouse Records.

Due to Green Day's success during the same period, major label interest in the underground was renewed and reps from most of the bigger players began to scope out Split Lip, showing up at performances, writing letters, inviting them out and raining a barrage of phone calls down upon Doghouse HQ. Needless to say, this didn't help the bands image as "rock stars" or "sellouts." In the past, Curtis seemed to take the harsh criticisms of Split Lip more personally than anyone else in the outfit. Nowadays, he seems far more at ease. **"I think things have gotten much more laid back,"** he says. **"People realize why people do things and even if they don't realize why they do them, they realize those people have reasons for doing them. A lot of stuff has changed. I've changed. You just get to the point where you want to try something different."** He makes no apologies for their aspirations. **"We want to go all the way with it. We don't want to say when we're thirty, 'oh, I could have done this.' We're going to try and do what we think is best for us and I think people have come to respect that."**

Chamberlain

A lot of kids have said that they feel as if bands like Chamberlain owe them something for the role they played in building their punk/hardcore foundation. Curtis doesn't necessarily think that is the case. "I can kind of see where they're coming from, but I don't think we owe anybody anything. I don't think anybody owes us anything. Everybody's in a certain scene to do what they do. We play music because that's what we're best at. I think changes just come. Unless you're close with people, you don't know what they think. At some points I think the label of 'sellout' can be fitting, but I stray from even using that term because everybody has different reasons for doing whatever they're doing. You know, 'get rich quick', that's a joke. I know tons of people on major labels who are still thinking about getting back to the day job." He adds, sarcastically, "I was talking to Mellencamp the other day and he's flipping burgers at the Jack in the Box down the street."

People in Indianapolis in particular often complain of attitudes or big headed-ness coming from the band, most often about Curtis in particular. Curtis feels that he can only speculate about where that comes from. "Well, I'm the one that's always out there talking to people. Everybody else has their lives ..." Again with the sarcasm, "... my life is sort of everybody else's lives." But seriously, "I think people mistake, not to sound like David, but a certain 'mystique' about us as an ego trip. We try to keep that [mystique] and I think that has made it that much more exciting for our listeners and the people who see us. Nobody knows a lot about us which is cool. I think everybody in the band when approached is pretty personable."

Although Chamberlain's music has grown by leaps and bounds since their formation as Split Lip, attendance at shows in the last two years has been decidedly down. Have the days of the massive India Community Center shows passed them by? "We were just in the right place at the right time," Curtis reflects. "It was great. I don't know if it has passed. I think in Indianapolis it comes and goes. Everybody is recycled so much. Back two or three years ago people were sixteen and in high school. There are people who weren't even around two years ago that now are like head honchos [in the scene], which is great. We haven't had a chance to play in Indianapolis for a while, so I don't know."

Back in 1990 around the time of Split Lip's inception, the five of them, intentionally or not, seemed to project a lot of idealism from the stage in regards to straight edge and animal rights. Over time, that idealism seems to have waned. A lot of people who supported them felt very alienated by that apparent about face. Curtis is quick to point out the irony in some of the life-styles of those very same critics. "A lot of people that complained when [our] members started to change have since gone through those same changes." He also adds that "we were pretty subtle about our idealism." But weren't there 'x's around their logo for some time? "Yeah, but everybody goes through their stages. I think a lot of people just wanted us to be a certain way so much that they made our image out in their heads. Everything keeps on changing 'though ... So what can you say? They only people that are let down are the people that don't know us. I know people who still believe exactly how they believed back then and I'm still friends with them and they still have every bit of respect for us."

David Moore, Chamberlain's singer, had a hard time keeping quiet while Curtis was being interviewed for this article. David often seems to feel as if he is being misunderstood or worse, misrepresented. When talk of criticism, gossip, or hearsay comes in his direction concerning him or his band mates, he self admittedly takes the reactionary approach- if they think he's a rock star, he'll play the part. Call him arrogant, he'll fit the bill. Tell him he's denying his hard-core roots, he'll proudly declare his disdain for the entire genre. What all of this masks from public view is the fact that David Moore is intelligent, articulate, analytical person with his own concerns and ideas that reach

WILT



- Claims to have slept with something close to 20,000 women. That's 1.2 women a day everyday since the age of fifteen.

- Claims to have slept with 14 of the 15 women attending a birthday held for him in San Francisco.

- Believes in gun control. "...there are too many crazies out there..."

- Respects Magic Johnson, Harry Belafonte, Margaret Thatcher, and Pope John Paul II the most in the world.

- Hates call waiting. "I know they are great for emergencies, but how many times have you gotten a call on "call waiting" that was a true emergency? I've never had one."

- Hates car mirrors with misleading messages written on them about the size of objects seen therein. "What about making an honest mirror that makes things appear as they really are? Who the hell needs a trick mirror on their car?"

- Is amused by his Beverly Hills neighbors. "I can't help but get a kick when I get a phone call from Farrah Fawcett, who lives next door, or from her housekeeper asking me if she and Ryan can have some lemons off one of my many lemon trees on my property."

- Hates the exploitation of movie-stars. "One of the most disgusting things to me is the selling of Movie Star Maps, guides to the stars' homes."

- T.V. isn't fair or truthful. "TV is telling you: This is the way it is supposed to be. Every girl in a love scene is pretty. You see very few interracial couples on television. How many good newscasters never even try for a job because they're balding?"



"The teenagers tend to call me Mr. Chamberlain. I mean, I'm not a rock n roll singer or a private eye or anything like that."

-Richard Chamberlain

"Out of the three billion females in the world...my twenty thousand is just a drop in the bucket."

-Wilt Chamberlain

far beyond what one can lay down on a record, or, ahem, in a fanzine. When asked about their musical shifts, Curtis stated that **"we just like to test waters and do things that haven't necessarily been done over and over again. Our music has never been consciously done, it's just been a natural thing. With every record we try and do something a little new."** At this, the reactionary within David sprang to life, no longer able to keep silent. **"I don't think it's even that we try to do something new. It's just a natural progression. If we didn't get so much feedback I wouldn't even notice any changes."** So there has not been any conscious musical moves? **"Absolutely not,"** David continues resolutely, adding mockingly **"There's been a conscious move to get away from playing shitty little hard core shows."**

David and Curtis did an interview late last year with Second Nature fanzine. In that interview, David commented that he had never really been a part of the hard core scene. Needless to say, a lot of people who read that took offense. David, however, fails to see what all of the fuss was about. **"See, I don't get that at all,"** he begins. **"Why would you [be offended]? What do I owe someone that's been listening to our music? I don't get that. How could anyone who has listened to our music and liked it enough to buy the records [be offended]."** But he was seen fronting a hard core band, playing hard core shows, etc. **"If you ask anybody who has known me,"** he argues, **"they'll say that I was never really into it. I've gone to shows that we've played and I've enjoyed what's gone on. But when you think about 'scenesters' and the whole hard core social network, that's what I've never really been a part of. I didn't even know what the hell [the hard core scene] was before I was in the band because I was in a crappy funk band before. I didn't know what kind of music [hard core] was."** As far as his visibility level and appearing to be active in the scene, **"everybody has their own immediate experiences to draw from so they're going to make assumptions that are not necessarily accurate."**

As far as expectations in the hard core scene go, David muses that **"people want to hear music that they could play because it makes them feel safe. You can't ask someone like Adam to deny his talent as a guitar player and write four chord progressions all of his life. I'm not knocking it, but I don't like that sort of music. I did when I was fourteen and fifteen and didn't know anything. But when you start to step outside of that is when you start to become a real marksman at what you do."** So can you play top notch music within the hard core setting at all? **"You can't,"** David maintains, a little regretfully. **"Because you get all of the remarks that we get. First it was 'Pearl Jam' when I had long hair and now that I've cut my hair, now it's 'Oasis'. That's what we get all of the time, people yelling that out. It's almost a taboo sort of thing to like us. They dubbed us 'post hard core' on the last record. Some people like us for a specific reason- to seem more progressive."** He explains further, **"There's a lot of closet listeners out there. I think that's noble. If someone has a problem with personal elements in the band, that they can still go out and listen to the music. Looking at our music and what it says as opposed to our personal lives and what we as individuals say, to be able to separate those is very noble."**

What does David attribute the shift in lyrical political idealism to? If nothing else, he seems to think that the ideological focus in hard core is far too limiting, particularly now that everyone seems to be singing about animal rights and veganism. **"Who wants to sing about animals all of their life? Who wants to sing about diet? Now when I think about singing about those things it is completely idiotic. Be an essayist. I don't want to sing about my diet. Just growing up and listening to the kind of music that touched me outside of any socio-political message. That kind of music always touched me a lot more. Because it is universal. You can't make everyone believe in animal rights. You can't make everyone believe that drinking and smoking and all that is wrong. But you can rest assured that everyone has the exact same emotional responses on an everyday level. People feel the same way basically. As long as you can rest on that assumption and write from that vantage point, then undoubtedly you're going to touch a lot of people."**

Within the hard core scene, music is seen as intrinsically linked with some sort of a message. David doesn't feel as if Chamberlain has necessarily lost that connection. **"There's more of a message now than there ever, ever could have been before,"** he states emphatically. **"I could have researched for twelve months on some animal rights issue and written some kind of expository song and there wouldn't have been half the message that there is now."** Curtis jumps in to curtail the whole topic. **"I think a lot of this controversy about our music, about our image, it is to the point where it is fictitious."** The evidence? **"There hasn't been a drop in record sales. Ever."**

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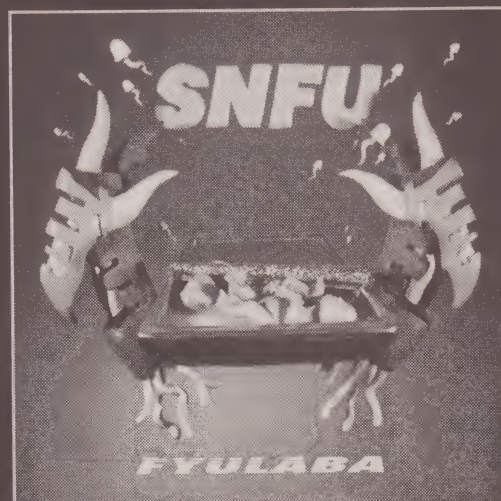
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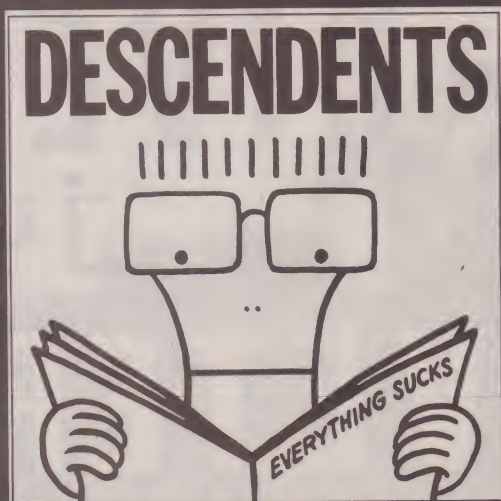
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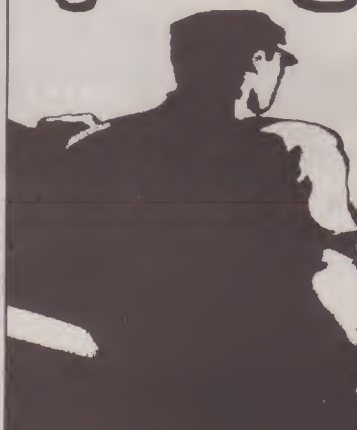


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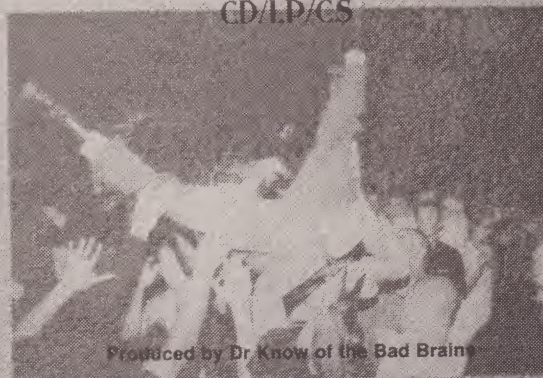
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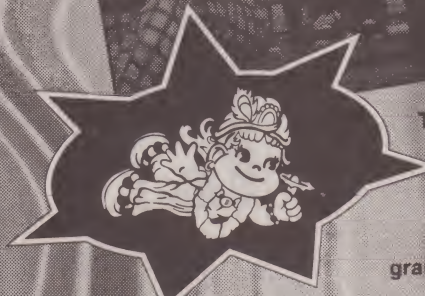
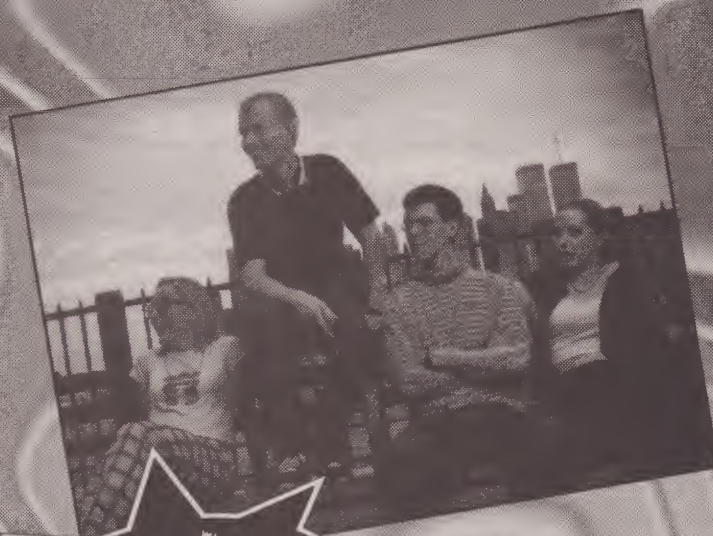
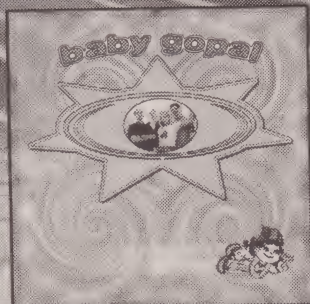
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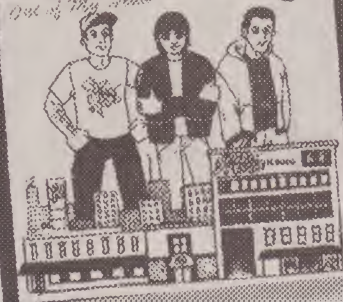
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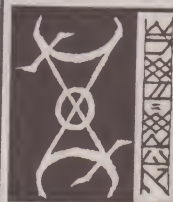
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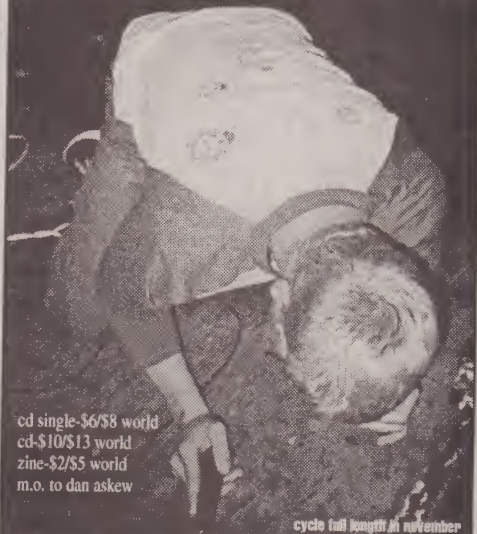
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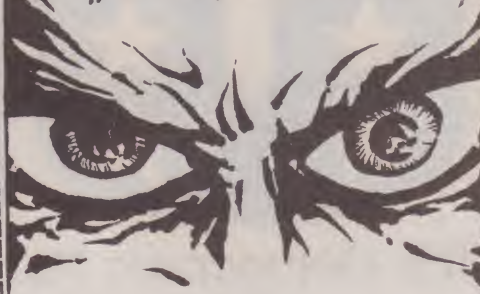
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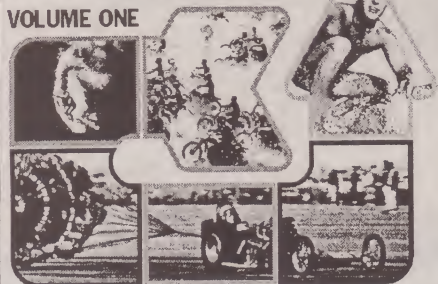
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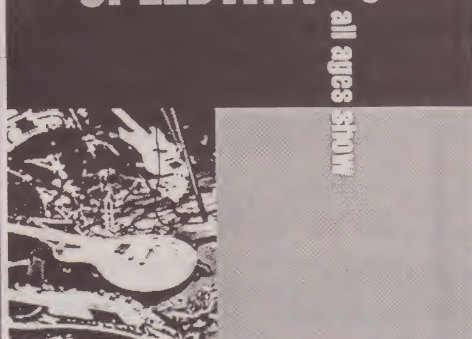
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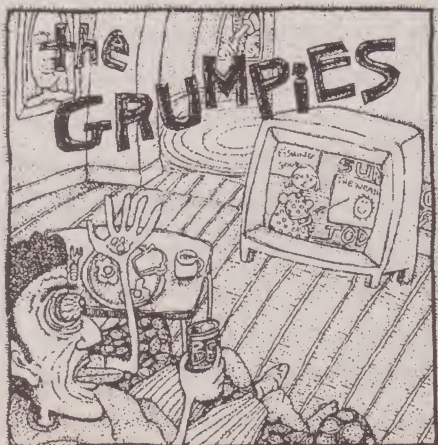
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DONKEY CON

Dispatches from the Democratic National Convention

by Paul Chan

photos by Andrew Natale

8/22/96, 10:30pm

Dispatch 1: The Circus is Coming.

By the time you read this, the circus will be gone. But as I type now, it's just setting up its tents. Everyone is preparing for the onslaught of Democratic delegates, media makers, and protester pouring into the city of Chicago for the 1996 National

Democratic

Convention. The adult bookstores in Chicago are ready, placing a huge ad in our city's biggest alternative paper, *The Reader*. It reads, "Welcome Democrats! Cast your ballot as often as you like...OUR BOOTHS ARE OPEN 24 HOURS!" The city is ready too, kicking out low income housing residents living near the convention center, and in some cases, completely tearing down their dilapidated housing projects to ensure the image of Chicago is pristine. I also hear the police is poised, practicing to swing their batons in a sidarm motion—as opposed to over the shoulder—so that if they beat anyone down, it won't look as menacing. I love a good circus.

There are, of course, different ways to love a circus. Most are here for the pageantry. But there are others who are lured by its political perversity. I sat in with a few of them at a meeting sponsored by the Chicago Countermedia project. On

a sweltering Tuesday, we (being people interested in volunteering to provide alternative media coverage of the DNC) met in an tutti-frutti coffehaus to discuss strategies, events, equipment, how to videotape pro-lifers without getting beat up, what to do in front of hostile police, who has a car, who has cameras, and who was interested in covering the Chicago Marriage License Bureau occupation by the quaintly militant Lesbian Avengers (I volunteered).

So now we wait, you and I. You, if you care to, can read on and find out things that happened weeks ago but are now only in my vague future. And me? I'm waiting for the circus. Why? Why participate? Why volunteer? Why bother? Because what if. We know that the pantless guy sticking a flaming sword up his buttocks to roast a marshmallow in his mouth won't really get hurt, or that the young limber girl in a bear suit walking on a thread three hundred feet up in the air won't really fall. But what if? What if the palpable frustration of Americans fed up with the fossilized polices of a dinosaur political party manifested itself physically—in protests, demonstrations, picketing, even rioting. What if the democrats get what they deserve and see a literal repeat of the 1968 convention, where kids run wild in the street, looking for cover, or a brick to throw, or perhaps a delegate to piss on, all to show that the days of rage in Chicago come from years of rage built up by the draconian socioeconomic policies that have come about courtesy of President McMuffin. What if? As you read and as I write, we both dream of circuses gone awry.



DNA



8/24/96, 9:40pm

Dispatch 2: Police State Party.

Kids with Down Syndrome parading up and down a stage lip-synching "Y.M.C.A" were the hands down favorite at the Chicago welcoming party for the media and delegates. The fashion show was a hit too, except for the first series of dresses which were made with American flags, proving once again that nationalism and good fashion sense are mutually exclusive. But duds like the patriot skirt were kept to a minimum. Or perhaps there was so much going on at this 25,000 people party that you couldn't tell what was good or bad—especially when you're constantly being buzzed by military helicopters overhead.

Incumbency has a way of attracting cheap and tawdry entertainment like horny boys to a whorehouse. Since there is no particular surprise or excitement about what will happen at the DNC, simulacra is provided to add some fireworks to an otherwise banal political affair. The lack of political substance is replaced with an excess of distractions. Distractions like this party.

Navy Pier, once a naval shipyard but now a shopping complex cum amusement park by way of the Disney philosophy of urban planning (a mishmash of architectural styles harkening back to a bygone era of Americana all dressed in garish cartoony colors) is the site of this peninsula of fun. And it is fun. Sort of. Actually it's loud and obnoxious. The whole place is set up as if the whole city has been reduced culturally to where only the 'best of Chicago' is given to the visiting delegates and media personnel to sample. On the Easternmost part of the peninsula a mini-taste of Chicago has been set up, where 25,000 hungry Democrats line up for up to half an hour to taste the best of Chicago cuisine—namely cheeseburgers and ribs with just enough meat on it to feed a small vermin. There was,

however, free beer and really good cheesecake. As the night wore on, the entertainment lineup piled on to one another. You couldn't walk more than ten yards before you ran into yet another stage where some musical act signifying the ethnic and cultural diversity of Chicago is singing, dancing, and sometimes yodeling their way into the hearts of the visiting jack asses: Swedish men's choir, a Black gospel group, a Latino guitar band, and of course, the kids with down syndrome, who were doing a revue of everything from the Village people to the Shangri-Las to Harry Carry and his institutionalized rendition of "Take me out to the ball game." And as these kids struggled to keep with the pace of the changing numbers and the changing of costumes, the crowd got larger and larger. The roar of military planes and helicopters overhead, courtesy of the Chicago Air and Water show being held at the same time as the party, provided the perfect background soundtrack. A police state party. What a way to start a convention.

8/25/96, 4:00pm

Dispatch 3: Protest politics

Cathy patiently explains to the confused, dark haired woman standing in front of her office desk that Hillary Clinton may not be at the protest sites at all. "But people need to know! She needs to know!" the dark haired woman insists. Two years ago, Anna immigrated to Chicago from Chechnya, which at that time still existed under the control of Russia. But things have changed. Chechnya broke away and demanded national autonomy and Russia responded to this act of insubordination with tanks and bomber planes. The price for freedom and a budding national identity is always paid in blood and it is this blood that Anna wants everyone to know about when all the eyes on Earth turn to the DNC. But she doesn't want just any ol' pair of eyes. She wants Hillary's eyes. Cathy again explains that City of Chicago's Special Events office doesn't have a schedule of where Hillary will be in Chicago—at any time. Cathy blankly stares at the woman as she immediately responds by asking, "Well, can I get a protest time closest to when Hillary will be in Chicago?"

City Hall will surely see more protest politicking once the DNC rolls off. For it is here, and it is Cathy, the only person manning the cavernous office this Sunday, who coordinates the logistics for the "official" protests for the Democratic National Convention in the City of Chicago." Cathy is a red-headed thirty-something with the diplomacy of Boutros Boutros Ghali and the spunk of Katie Couric; two traits that put

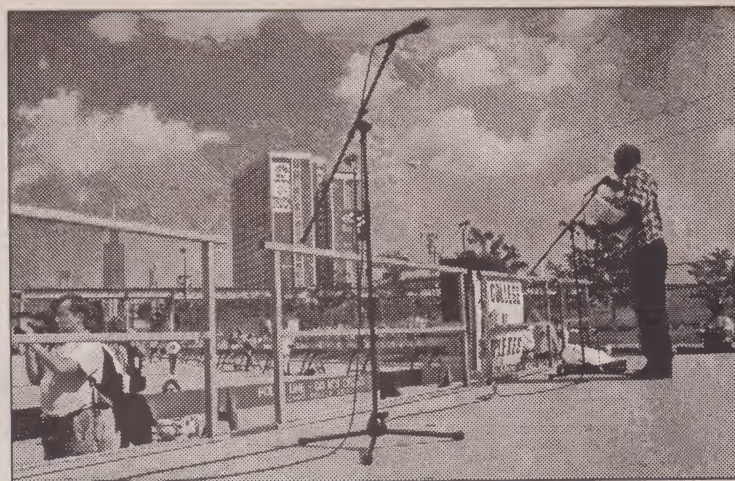
Let Them Eat Cake: mountains of cheesecake at the welcoming party



her diminutive frame at a distinct advantage when dealing with the likes of the woman from Chechnya. Or Jeffrey, the man who has been hanging around the office, chatting, politicking, but mostly chatting about outer space and protest space to anyone who will listen (I'll get to him later). The city of Chicago has been planning to baby-sit protesters in their fair city for months. Some can even say years; ever since '68—the year of hope and infamy. Since then dissenters of the socioeconomic status quo have been licking their wounds, preparing for another chance at change while the status quo has honed their instruments of discipline, making sure the convention runs as smoothly as a commercial. Tactics have changed on both sides, to varying degrees of success. In '68, discipline came in the form of billy clubs and tear gas. In 1996, paperwork is the form of choice.

Today, Cathy is taking applications for demonstrators interested in protesting in the remaining time slots at the two official protest sites allotted by the City of Chicago. The sites—a parking lot adjacent to the convention center called lot E, and the street corner of Balbo and Michigan in downtown Chicago—comes complete with a stage, a sound system, security, and free bottled water. This strategy of accommodation and compromise on the part of the city isn't a new one for cities hosting political conventions, but it is a devious one. For beneath the facade of accommodation lies the true face of the strategy: to neutralize the political potency of protests by

controlling the two basic presuppositions needed in any populist action—space and time. Discipline organizes an analytical space, a space which seems to accommodate all parties involved but in fact only benefits those who wield the discipline and whose logic the space is organized under. And in this case, it is the logic of Chicago that pervades, setting up the field rules of protest that ensure that police and DNC security—ranging from private firms to the FBI and CIA—will always know where protests are; that the city can always control the number of protesters involved; that protesters never come near dele-



Standing Room Only: Protesting to no one at Lot E

gates, the media, or the general Chicago masses; that by law and force the city can dictate how long a protest lasts; that the city can even define what is appropriate protesting gear (protest signs with wooden

stick handles were prohibited because "they could be used as weapons and can be dangerous"). The Democrats and the city want to disciple protesters, and they're doing it with schedules, paperwork, and free bottled water.

No one seems to mind, however. At least not the people who are signing up to protest at the two sites. Anna told me that by letting enough people know about how awful the war is the United States would be forced to get involved. And this is especially true, Anna confides to me, if Hillary knew what was going on. Jeffrey, who has hung out at suite 100 like some clueless barfly, also has something to tell Hillary and the rest of the Democrats: colonize

Mars. He's the head liaison for the National Space Society, a private organization dedicated to lobbying for an expanded space program: more space shuttles, more satellites, more trips to Jupiter, and perhaps a colony or two on Mars. NSS has glutted City Hall with applications for protest times and space, applying under four different organizations. And they've hit pay dirt. At last count, NSS and their concomitant groups snatched 20% of the total official protest times. His goal for today is to hang out at suite 100 to swap protest times or outright give times away. Apparently the space guys received so much protest time at

Incumbency has a way of attracting cheap and tawdry entertainment like horny boys to a whorehouse

the sites that they didn't have the personnel to demonstrate at them all. Other groups did apply; the A.F.L.-C.I.O, the Illinois Nurses Association, Operation Rescue, and the obligatory hippies-who-want-to-legalize-Marijuana-for-a-better-tomorrow groups dot the protest lineup like gnats on a muffin. But notably absent are organizations with real or reputed political bite; no Rainbow Coalition nor the Democratic progressive caucus; the National Organization for Women and the newly created Green, Labor, and New parties were nowhere to be found. Sure, every one hates lung cancer, but can the disenfranchised millions really count on the American Lung Association (scheduled to protest on Wednesday) to show the way for a brighter future, one not only devoid of lung cancer, but of institutional racism and socio/economic injustices as well? Most of the groups are protesting to get their message across, as if attention is the same thing as action. The protesters are looking for media attention. When will their agenda line up with our need for political action?

8/25/96, 10:15pm

Dispatch 4: Countermedia benefit party; Paranoia and David Dellinger

Countermedia, the "Independent news resource for free thinking people" is holding a welcome/benefit party tonight. This media collective began in early 1996 and has evolved into an organization poised to provide alternative media coverage of the DNC on the radio, the Internet, cable-access, the radio, and various independent publications. The core group of seven to ten set up an office,

Having Some Fun Now: too much excitement at the Countermedia party



referred to as Echo base, Southeast of the convention center, which is affectionately known as the Death Star (see the Star Wars-speak yet?) The office is an amalgamation of papers, equipment, and young people. It's a young group. Most are white, college-educated, and hungry for political/activist work. If the circus goes awry, they hope to be in the thick of it.

One can't help but be drawn into the clichéd cardinal sin of making connections between the '68 convention and the one which will begin tomorrow. In 1968 thousands of scared and angry young people lashed back at a government sending their friends and brothers and sisters into a war that seemed to lack any reason. Thousands more joined the politically motivated into Chicago to taste a counterculture that promised free love, free drugs and freedom from the societal constraints every teenager dreams of escaping. Within this teeming mass of anger and lasciviousness came the billy clubs and tear gas. The mythos of the '60s ideal of totalizing social change engaged in physical melee with the status quo, embodied in Mayor Richard J. Daley's brutal police force. And the kids in the street looking for some action unfortunately found some. The need for action is still here. One can sense it in the urgency of Countermedia as they prepare for the convention; holding meetings for people who want to get involved; sending out press kits to the mainstream press and organizations participating in the DNC; strategizing with activist groups about demonstration tactics and organizational logistics.

The heart may be there, but it's missing a body. There are no teeming masses of disaffected youth ready to create some havoc at the '96 convention, which is not to say that young people in America aren't disaffected. In fact the state of young people in America is in many ways bleaker than 1968. America has, since the 80's, more children in poverty than any other industrialized country in the world. We also have the highest infant mortality rate. It gets worse when you grow up, because there has been a steady decline in federal funds for public schools, a slashing of federal and state social welfare protection programs for children, and a chipping away at the promise of providing for a college education through subsidized loans and school grants. And with our economy shifting principally from manufacturing to service, most young Americans are stuck in low wage, low benefit jobs without any prospects of vertical socio-economic movement. All the ingredients for a social rupture in the form of protests, demonstrations, and activism are there. But the masses aren't massing, which is in itself another sign of the bleakness most young people feel

about things changing. "Despair, like the absurd, has opinions and desires about everything in general and nothing in particular," Albert Camus wrote. "Silence express this attitude very well." The silence of the young masses remind me of a funeral dirge.

It's far from being a funeral at the benefit party. But one wouldn't necessarily call it a party either. More like a sermon. A really dull one. Held at a stuffy warehouse made all the more unbearable by the torrid heat and high humidity, the seventy to eighty people at the party were transfixed with an elderly white man on stage who spoke with the grace and gravity of a delusional and possibly drunk grandfather. I turn to ask who the man was. "David Dellinger," the man adjacent to the stage said. Dellinger spoke. People listened. He spoke some more; something about how Jesse Jackson is full of himself. After a while the focus on Dellinger loosened. The novelty of having one of the original Chicago Seven recounting the good old activist days—day by day—quickly wore thin. Dellinger droned on, and people turned their attention to other things; to people in the back of the warehouse building giant Clinton and Dole puppets which will be used in a protest/parade in a couple days; to the table of flyers and leaflets about activist groups around the country; to the juice bar in the corner. Every once a while someone yells out some diatribe about how the cops are following and harassing party goers on the street. A reply then follows from another part of the warehouse about similar incidence in the back alley. The party, after Dellinger and Paul Krassner earlier on, keeps the party spirit alive by generating a constant state of paranoia. And I don't think I'm being paranoid on my part. Not once did I see the kind of harassment the perimeter security at the party spoke of. In fact, I didn't see one piece of pork anywhere near the party. In the end, the paranoia turned to my friend Andrew and I. We were dressed in cheap suits and fake mustaches at the party—a ritual we have acquired whenever we attend events we wish to cover journalistically. As we sat in the back of the party, a woman approaches Andrew and strikes up a conversation. As they talk, the woman tells Andrew about how "people are becoming very scared of you guys." Andrew asks why, and she replies that people "think you guys are with the FBI or something." We look at each other in disbelief. If people involved with Countermedia are

The state of young people in America is in many ways bleaker than 1968



The Big Fuck You: a bi-partisan middle finger to politics in general at Lot E

afraid of two jerks with fake mustaches, cheap suits, and clunky photo equipment, what are they going to do when they run into cops, or camera crews from CNN?

8/25/96, 11:25am

Dispatch 5: A protest is a protest is a protest.

In front of the garish circus-like monstrosity known as the State of the Illinois building the first large-scale demonstration for the DNC gathers force. The demo is called the Raise the Living Wage protest, sponsored by the most politically powerful labor organization in the country, the A.L.F.-C.I.O. Banners are being raised, and free signs and T-shirts are being passed out by the handful. By the time it starts rolling, the demonstration is a couple hundred strong, screaming for more worker's rights and a higher minimum wage.

Just across the street, on the sidewalk of City Hall, another protest

takes shape. The Lesbian Avengers in coalition with a young progressive socialist party is staging a takeover of the City of Chicago's marriage license bureau to protest the illegality of same-sex marriages. This demo is considerably smaller,

as thirty to thirty five people endlessly tread the same piece of sidewalk chanting rhythmically about rights and laws and freedoms under the Constitution. Across the street from them is a man holding what looks like the Ten Commandments on a stick. And in fact it is. Sort of. The placards quote various biblical passages, especially those pertaining to the wrongness of homosexuality. The man accompanies his cardboard commandments with shouts of, "It's not natural," and, "It's not right." No one pays much attention to him except the TV reporters and news photographers who would rather cover one lunatic than two demonstrations. Flashes of light and whirling clicking sounds surround the man. A passerby walks up to him, shakes his hand, and says, "Good luck, my man. We feel the same way."

We. He said we. I was puzzled by the plurality of the subject in his sentence. There was only one guy. Why did he say we? I watched him cross the street, walking past the marriage license bureau protester, heading south. That was when I realized why he said we. The homophobic sympathizer was a Chicago firefighter who joined hundreds of other Chicago firefighter two blocks South of City Hall, where they were preparing for their own rally. They started working their way towards City Hall, marching right through the small band of Lesbian Avengers and Progressive socialists, yelling the strange slogan, "No Brass Bill!" The same-sex marriage protester looked at each other in disbelief and simply tried to wait until the firefighters march past the sidewalk before resuming their protest. Three different demonstrations in the proximity of one city block, all vying for the attention of the downtown Chicago

workers and the local and national media. MTV showed up to cover the same-sex marriage protest. And only that. Apparently kids who are being exploited by multi-national corporations like Burger King who gets away with paying kids at such a dismal hourly work wage that it's a crime is a non-issue with the MTV audience. On the other hand, I don't blame them for not covering the firefighters' rally. I still don't know what the hell a Brass Bill is.

8/25/96, 6-19pm

Dispatch 6: Ground Zero

Inside the convention hall it is loud and crowded. It's the first day and nothing is going on but everyone is rushing to go somewhere. Hot dogs are \$2.75 and there's security every five feet. It's dull and dulling. During tonight's proceedings, a whiter-than your panties white woman on the stage led a stadium full of Democrats in the Macarena, that Latino song-inspired dance craze that's sweeping the country. I promise myself that the year a white woman at the Democratic National Convention brings on stage a piece of dirty cardboard and leads a stadium full of Democrats in a break dancing competition is the day I vote Democrat.

8/27/96, 12-10pm

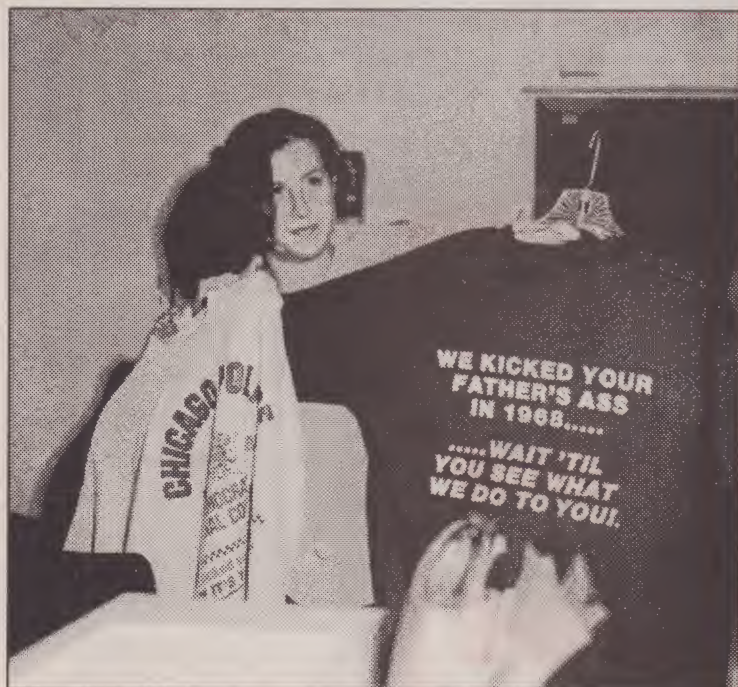
Dispatch 7: Pigs make funny T-shirts

Conventions always yield the best souvenirs. Collecting various campaign pins and memorabilia have become an institution of sorts for delegates, the media, and other bystanders looking to covet a piece of the political action. The year's hot collector item, however, doesn't come from the bowels of the democratic media machine or savvy entrepreneurs looking for a quick buck. The hot item comes courtesy of the Chicago Police department.

Seven to eight blocks from the United Center is Cop's Corner, a police accessory outlet store. Business has been good for C2 over the last week. But it's not the Teflon jackets or the custom-made cow hide holsters that's boosting the bottom line. It's an ordinary looking navy blue T-shirt on display in the back of the store. On the front, a large Chicago police badge in white floats above "The 1996 Democratic National Convention" lettering. On the back, the plain white lettering reads, "We kicked your father's ass in 1968...wait 'till you see what we're going to do with you!"

"We've sold about a thousand of the T-shirts this week," Marcia, the manager of C2 tells me. Her co-worker agrees, nodding and giggling

The Shirt: does it make you more a kid if you wanna off a pig?



at the sight of my three friends and I as we stand amused and afraid of the prospect of such an grotesquely anti-PC shirt being such a big hit with virtually everyone. Cameramen from CNN had them on. Security at the DNC proudly wears them. Conventioneers were trying to buy some for their kids back home. It's apparently funny to beat up kids—then and now.

"Are most of the buyers cops?" I ask. "No, oh no," Marcia says. "Convention people are the ones buying them. Some guy came in and bought 20 of them the other day." Marcia's co-worker interrupts: "Yeah, but some people are reselling them at a higher price. I heard vendors were selling them at the convention for as much as \$23 each."

When asked about who made the T-shirts, Marcia looks straight at me and nonchalantly states, "We don't know where they come, we just sell them." This is, as I later realized, three sentences in one. The first is just what she said. The second sentence, spoken with the tone of her voice, reads, "I have been saying this line to the media—which includes CNN, Newsweek, and other local news reporters—for weeks." The third sentence, spoken with the steadiness of her gaze as she stated her ignorance, said, "Ask again and wait 'till you see what we're going to do with you."

The interview continued, but it's simply chit chat in Q and A form. There's not much more about the shirts, except that it comes in two other styles and that C2 ran out of smalls and mediums long ago. I don't wear a large, but I bought one anyway.

8/27/96, 9:00pm Dispatch 8: Tracking the Hippies.

Patricia Glenn and I are tracking the hippies tonight. I met Patricia when I strolled outside the confines of the protest pit lot E and headed toward the outskirts of the security zone surrounding the United Center. Right next to the horse-mounted police and the free Snapple beverage cart sat Patricia, a black woman in her late forties sporting a baseball cap and a Department of Justice badge. She sat next to a parking lot, scanning the horizon East of us. I brought her a free Snapple because she looked parched and asked her if it was okay if she drank on the job. She said as long as it wasn't one of those crazy flavors that it was fine with her superiors.



I Wanna Riot: anarchists getting angry

For the next three hours I hung out with Patricia, who had more in common with me than I suspected. She's from Chicago. And as it turns out, we have the same Alma Mater—The School of the Art

The year a white woman at the Democratic National Convention brings on stage a piece of dirty cardboard and leads a stadium full of Democrats in a break dancing competition is the day I vote Democrat.

Institute. "I graduated in painting and drawing," Patricia said, "but I just couldn't make a living doing art." One day, her friend convinced her to try out for a job at the Department of Justice. "It was just a paper pushing job, but it

was more than I ever had." She got the job, and one thing led to another, until she became a field operative for the United States Department of Justice.

"John, what's going on? Over," Patricia said into her Walkie Talkie. Patricia's assignment tonight is to track a demonstration as it

works its way from Chicago's Wicker Park neighborhood to the convention center. The demonstration is an amalgamation of several different activist organizations protesting under the name the Not On The Guest List group. This ragtag band consists of anarchist organizations, people from the Countermedia project, a Native American activist group and other political entities of the left. "What's going on John," Patricia asked again, "Do you have protection? Are there police around you? Over." The sound of static crackles through the Talkie and John answers, "Is there sunshine in the morning? Over." Pat and the other operatives from the Department have been tracking this demonstration for two hours. So has the FBI and the Chicago police. Security forces at the DNC are not taking any chances. For Pat, it's perfectly natural. A highly publicized event like the convention needs this kind of protection, she tells me. It starts getting creepy when she begins to point at the tops of some tall buildings around the convention center. "If things really get out of hand, they've got people up there. And if you watch the roofs of some of those buildings, you can see them stretching." She's talking about snipers.

"We don't expect trouble. But if there is, we're ready," Patricia tells me. Hour three of her assignment passes, and the group of demonstrators have yet to reach their final destination, to the chagrin the Pat and her people in the field. It seems as if the group opted not to go protest at the United Center after all, and decided to hang out in front of some public housing projects Northwest of the center. "What are they doing? Over" Patricia asked John. "Well, they're running around and yelling, Pat. It's kind of like the Olympics. Can't we just give them a couple of medals and tell them to go home? Over." It's a strange state of affairs when protesters decide not to protest and

instead of fighting demonstrators the police has to battle the scourge of banality.

8/27/96, 9:45pm

Dispatch 9: Something queer from the rear

President McMuffin has taken the stage and is spelling out his vision for America for the next four years when he again becomes President. Not if, but when. That's a lot of balls from a man whose political spinelessness has made him a dubious ally—if not an outright enemy—to many of his constituencies who put him in office four years ago. But everything has been forgotten—the reversal on his pledge for gay and lesbian equal rights, his promise to cut the defense budget, his teary-eyed sermon on the need to protect the poor and the children—everything has been swept under the rug of Democratic pageantry. What is left is the hollow shell of a president, a virtual leader running on outdated political software, speaking to a packed house without one person in the audience realizing that this country really needs a serious upgrade.

Well, not exactly everyone. High above and behind the white Romanques stage, in the nosebleed seating section is Paul, who is videotaping Clinton's address—the last event of a completely eventless convention (unless you count Dick Morris, the head political strategist for the Clinton camp getting fired for being caught with a prostitute who many people claim has an uncanny resemblance to Sherry Lewis, the creator Lamchop the puppet. I'm not counting this as significant, because Morris is an asshole anyway, and deserved getting fired but more importantly, deserved getting caught with a creepy looking whore.) From this perspective one gets to see what Clinton is seeing; a sea of Democratic banners and American flags; 10,000 delegates listening with baited breath to a fairy-tale of economic progress and civil renewal; hundreds of cameras transfixed; and of course, the large screen teleprompter scrolling an assembly line of empty promises for McMuffin to repeat.

Paul is getting all of this on tape. He is one of the co-founders of the Countermedia project's video branch. He is also the producer of Labor Beat, a Chicago cable access show in Chicago devoted to covering progressive labor issues in Chicago. He stands motionless, only moving his wrists as he guides his tripod mounted video camera for a slow pan of the arena. For the last four days Paul, like every other independent media-maker here, has been looking to give the DNC an alternative spin; to report the stories that are being ignored by the mainstream news orga-

If You Bribe Them, They Will Come: goodie bags for the press

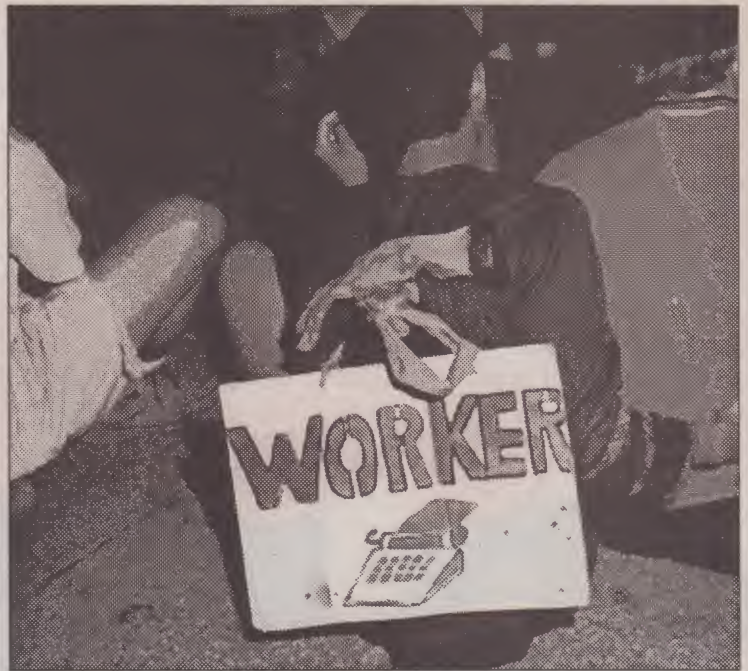


nizations; to expose the absurdity and vulgarity of the event; and to critique the Democratic political/media machinery.

But it's easier said than done. The DNC has been a tightly orchestrated dance of politics and pageantry since it began on Monday. The cacophony of the convention —schedules, the endless number of speakers, the toil and play of the delegates and security— virtually undermines any attempt at critical examination by enveloping the DNC in a haze of perpetual chaos. It's all like one big distraction. Or a monster headache.

Who knew, then, that the respite from this headache would be from behind the DC stage, staring right at President McMuffin's rather large buttocks as he lies to the country for what is now a 50 minute speech (McMuffin is notoriously long-winded. He gave a 2-hour speech once at the '88 DNC. And he wasn't even a Presidential nominee.) Paul apparently knew. That's why his back here, away from everyone at the United Center, who wants to see the frontal McMuffin. It's too bad, since 99% of the United Center is missing what Paul sees, potentially the most significant piece of imagery to come out of the DNC. Flanking the stage on both sides are two Godzilla-sized video projection screens dedicated to showing the stage speaker. The stereophonic video setup looks impressive from the front. But something queer occurs when viewed from the rear. Since the screens are translucent, the projected image can be seen from behind. But it's all backwards. But not only is the video backwards, the echo from the speakers reverberating around the stadium and behind the stage make it sound as if the audio is playing backwards as well.

Everyone behind the stage is enjoying this strange audio/video effect. It has a strange metaphorical effect as well, seeing the double image of McMuffin speaking gibberish and seeing the 10,000 delegates and 20,000 media personnel cheer and swoon with each gobbledygook that escapes his mouth, and realizing that the gook and its antithesis, scrolling



Kicking Ass for the Working Class: a protester gets to the point fast.

on the teleprompter McMuffin is reading from, has the same contextual significance, which is to say none.

There is also another piece of significant imagery here, but this one more somber. It is the image of Paul, his camera, and the scattered few who make up the audience behind the dazzling white stage.

Besides Paul, who is white, everyone else is Latino and Black, and they all worked as minimum wage staff and

faux security for the convention. It's a disconcerting metaphor, seeing the millions of people who the Democrats have turned their backs on, progressive white, the working class, disenfranchised minorities, metaphysically embodied in those few bodies watching the proceedings of a party whose rhetoric is as relevant to them as pig Latin. They watch, sometimes laughing, but most of the time blankfaced, perhaps knowing the gravity of the significance of listening to a man who promises them all the riches and freedoms of America without ever once looking at them in the eyes.

What is left is the hollow shell of a president, a virtual leader running on outdated political software, speaking to a packed house without one person in the audience realizing that this country really needs a serious upgrade.

NO PLACE IN THE SUN

ALL ALONE AT THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

by Aaron Shuman

illustrations by Mark Reusch



OMINOUS SIGNS

For this assignment, I started where all good reporters should: the library.

Normally, a topic index search on a city will turn up something nifty like "fire." Choose this, and you will discover that a cow kicked over a lantern in 19-what-ever; thus started the Great Fire prompting apocalyptists to proclaim His coming, and you feel really good, as if cramming your head with the arcanities of a city means something. In San Diego's case, it did, for the following topics scrolled on my screen:

- San Diego (CA)— Border Patrol
- San Diego (CA)— Child Abuse
- San Diego (CA)— Drug Traffic
- San Diego (CA)— Gangs
- San Diego (CA)— Government Investigations

San Diego (CA)— Narcotics Control

San Diego (CA)— Police (3 times: biography, fiction, history)

San Diego (CA)— Undercover Operations

And that's just an abbreviated list. Overall, 20% of the San Diego topics referred to law enforcement— the sign of the Beast!

I booked my ticket for America's Finest City (or so its billboards proclaim) when a friend who'd lived there for a year and almost settled permanently assured me that while he may not be able to get me prime downtown digs, he could without a doubt find some surfer in Encinitas to put me up. Well, said friend did not come through, and as I went through my phone book depressingly quickly, posted signs in every groovy info-shop and coffeehouse, begged co-workers and— yes! I'll admit it!— relatives, I learned that just as with convicts, no one on the outside will admit to knowing anyone in San Diego. (I say this as a seven-year Californian, with most of my time done in Los Angeles.) Nor could I find anyone in the hotbed of radicalism known as the Bay Area, where I live, who was going down to protest (although once there, I saw a few familiar faces). I called VOICES '96, the progressive über-coalition, but their community housing was filled up, so I headed down with a coat to keep me warm on Black's Beach.





PIGS ON HOGS

"This just shows that all kinds of people are supporting Republicans."—MN Sen. Olympia Snowe

Of what, pray tell, does dear Olympia speak? It's not quite so image-busting as the two men of Gays Ga-ga for Dole (their t-shirts: a haggard Dole glaring from a pink triangle, with a triangulated Ole Glory at his side). Nor was it as significant as the convening of the Republican Minority Coalition.¹

As a testament to the G.O.P.'s diversity, the convention opened with a motorcycle rally. Stung by one too many "Last of the Dinosaurs" jokes, the Dole campaign sought to inject some youthful vitality into the proceedings— something, too, to compliment the bad boy image Republicans cherish as revolutionaries, tellers of unpleasant truths, people of faith in a faithless world.

Down the ramp from Fiesta Island they rode, announced by the roar of their engines. They even got a real-life, honest to God Injun to lead 'em, too— CO Sen. Ben Lighthorse Campbell, one of several Democrats to jump parties since '94. Campbell came without ceremonial headdress, but he did pull his hair into a ponytail, prompt-

ing a few— Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (MS) among them—to tape coon's tails to their helmets.

For a block or two, you could see these easy riders through the double fences, across the trolley tracks. Then they disappeared behind a Santa Fe train, pulled up to prevent potshots. When the train ended, they were safe within the fortress of Media City, from which it was just a short walk over to the amphitheater to greet Dole and Kemp, arriving on a barge from North Island Naval Station.

PARTY IN THE PIT

This convention came complete with its own "free speech zone", thoughtfully provided by the R.N.C. so that even nutbags could have a place to go (preferably, out of the streets of the Gaslamp Quarter, which contains the convention center). "Zone" was an unfortunate choice in words, since it begged one to ask what kind of speech was permitted outside it. The answer, all too frequently, was "paid," as the bistros and cafes of the Gaslamp, draped in red, white, and blue bunting, were nightly reserved for groups like Charlton Heston's ARENA PAC, Newt Gingrich's GOPAC, and (my favorite) Tom DeLay's ARMPAC, which resulted in styrofoam F-14s streaking across the face of Johnny Love's Restaurant. But for those wacky protesters, there was a 15-ft. high fenced-in lot with gobs of police; let no one suggest that the G.O.P. does not care.

Protest zones have been designated in convention planning since the riots, real and anticipated, of '68 and '72. San Diego's was new in two ways: first, in the degree to which it was secured and separated; second, in that the city instituted a scheduling process, with groups applying for 55-minute chunks of dissent time. This inherently favored those with the best organization and most resources, who could apply months in advance and turn out the numbers to justify it— hence, the preponderance of Democratic party clubs on the protest docket.² Gone were the zones of yesteryear, open to anyone at (almost) any time.

According to the city, this was for the protesters' sake. When asked why the scheduling, a police spokesman cooed, "To provide a stage and sound system for the demonstrators." When asked why the cops checking bags or massed across the street, the answer was that this ensured the demonstrators' safety. It seems the police, who in the weeks prior to the convention were accused of sweeping up to 800 homeless out of the area, were as concerned with civil rights as the G.O.P.

It's that concern which explains why party planners sought to move the zone almost a mile south, nearer the Coronado bridge than the convention center— presumably, another safety measure, or insurance that demonstrators would get better press coverage if not overshadowed by Media City. Only an injunction won by the ACLU prevented this.

Still, the sight of one group after another strutting into the protest pen was depressing enough. This relativized protest: San Diegans for Honest Government—a woman decrying the site of the new main library, with her husband on bass drum to punctuate every sentence—occupied the same space as VOICES '96, the largest progressive coalition. The Union-Tribune treated us to photo spreads of Butt-Man, an anti-smoking crusader, with MEChA, almost single-handedly responsible for the week's largest march. To be fair, the U-T devoted more space to protest than I'd expected, but the overall effect of the "free speech zone" and its coverage was to reduce protesters to an indiscernible crowd of scruffy, misguided, but essentially harmless and lovable kids, which is how delegates striding into the convention three blocks away must have seen them.

Protesters did nothing to challenge this. After all, declaring a zone for protest can't legally prohibit it outside. The convention was unprecedentedly secure, but the city beyond could have been their battleground; if "confronting" Republicans was truly an aim, as speaker after speaker in the zone proclaimed, then why not take the bullhorn and the pickets to their hotels, restaurants, and fundraisers? The only group to do so was Operation Rescue, which on Tuesday occupied public space—the grassy median of Harbor Drive before the convention center. (This is to say nothing of their actions throughout San Diego during the week, about which, more later.) Some pro-choicers decried this as evidence of police complicity. Others took the line of Rev. Katherine Ragsdale from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, "I'm appalled that they would be allowed to stay when everyone had been quite clear about...the rules." In truth, they had simply been out-foxed—O.R. knew its rights to protest better than progressives—and it's no coincidence that the following day, NOW led their marchers beyond the concrete anti-terrorist barriers to the sidewalk opposite the convention center. By then, it was Wednesday night, and the proceedings were almost over.

(LET'S HAVE A) TV PARTY

In fairness, it should be noted that convention planners sought no more control over protesters than they did over their own delegates. Learning from '92, when Pat Buchanan hijacked proceedings by declaring "spiritual and cultural war on America"—a disaster one commentator compared to the Chicago riots in '68—Paul Manafort, convention manager, cracked the whip on his own party. The convention was to be an "infomercial," the delegates an "audience." Speakers only got ten minutes (except for Dole and Kemp) and their speeches were supplemented with video, which afforded little time to deviate from the pre-approved text. Each speaker was assigned a "speech liaison" by the convention to ensure a concordance of messages. Dissenters were kept from the podium altogether.³

Gone were the floor fights—the platform, hacked out the week before, sailed through in an afternoon. Gone were the contested nominations, as first Colin Powell, then Buchanan, discouraged movements to draft them and took their place under "the big tent." Gone was the drama that made conventions such compelling spectacles in the past. Gone, in short, was news, in this "TV-friendliest" of conventions.

The networks responded by cutting coverage to an all-time low of 30 hours. Ted Koppel made a stir by pulling Nightline out of San Diego on Tuesday night, insisting that there was no news left to justify remaining. In the short term, this egregious attempt for "free advertising" (which the Dole campaign, long strapped for money, sorely needed) may have hurt the Republicans: Dole's "bounce"—the customary 10 to 15% jump candidates take in opinion polls after their nominating convention—lasted barely two weeks. Even after the debacle in '92, George Bush rode his 5% longer. Nielsen ratings opened unusually high (perhaps for Colin Powell's Monday night speech?) but sank unusually fast, as first the public, then the media, responded disdainfully to the brokered proceedings.

In the long term, however, this satisfied the party elite's desire for control of their convention. Some commentators envision a

near-future when networks and the great majority of the populace will ignore conventions, with the few interested tuning into coverage on C-SPAN, CNN, MicroSoft/NBC or the party's own Web page. You need only consider the decline in voter turnout to determine what effect this larger withdrawal of politics from the people will have. While pro-choicers in the party mutely accepted the platform and Buchananites sat with "Let Pat Speak" stickers over their lips (their signs having been confiscated), protesters in the zone hurled their dissent to the wind, and a diminishing viewership watched from their recliners. A U-T headline proclaimed, "Designated protest site runs like clockwork," but so did the convention.

'Free Speech Zone' was an unfortunate choice in words, since it begged one to ask what kind of speech was permitted outside it. The answer, all too frequently, was 'paid.'

CITY OF CHOICE



here were fireworks; there was flagwear in all its variety and color-coded cowboy hats (red for Texas, red with a yellow band for Arizona, white for Oklahoma, etc.), but the greatest red, white, and blue spectacle was the Friendly Fire boutique on Island Street. Its storefront had been painted just for the occasion; its red columns leapt out on a block of drab, flat-faced garages. Friendly Fire sold a line of faux bulletproof vests, with a shooting-range target on the back and complimentary artwork on the front. These ranged from the uninspired (a dashiki print on the Rodney King vest) to the sanctimonious (bloody handprints on the artist vest), but for my money, the best marriage of form and content was the America's Finest City vest (half-American flag, half-barbed wire) or perhaps the gold lamè of democracy.

None of these, however, held the honor of Vest of the Day for five days running. That distinction went to the Roe v. Wade vest, appropriate considering that Operation Rescue had vowed to shut

down San Diego abortion providers for the duration of the convention. The police took this threat so seriously that they recommended women's clinics "take the week off." Instead, clinics got injunctions to keep O.R. 500 feet away and beefed up on security, with one clinic spending its annual security budget on the one week. WomanCare, the clinic nearest the convention, organized a Saturday night sleep-over and waited.

O.R.'s doomsday scenarios did not come to pass. Aside from a two-hour blockade of tiny Family Planning Associates in La Mesa, O.R. did not succeed in preventing abortions; perhaps the best testament to their weakness is the fact that after blocking FPA on Saturday, they returned there on Tuesday, unable to hit the larger targets of WomanCare or Planned Parenthood. Within San Diego, they were the most visible protest group, rallying on Harbor Drive and outside a pro-choice Republican fundraiser,

staging a sit-in in the office of pro-choice Republican Mayor Susan Golding and a "fetus burial" in Children's Park, but these actions received little if any attention nationally. In the end, O.R. found itself in the paradoxical position of targetting Republicans—paradoxical, because while 60% of party membership is pro-choice, the vast majority of delegates and party leaders weren't and had in the most heated battle over platform, succeeded in defending the pro-life plank. If O.R. intended to reach and convert party members in their homes, they failed; tainted by their refusal to repudiate killers like Paul Gunn and John Salvi, increasingly shrill in their rhetoric, they seemed like a dying, but still desperate and dangerous, breed.

Nonetheless, it was distressing to find that O.R. outnumbered pro-choicers 2, even 3-to-1 at its actions.⁴ Weaned on contentious clinic defenses with marshals, spies, walkie-talkies, and videocameras, holy water and spit sprayed liberally, elbow-locked lines meeting prayer circles, proffering jarred fetuses, stink bombs, and blood, I did not understand how O.R., without much of an apparent pro-choice mobilization (and an especially civil one at that), was being rebuffed.

Tuesday I set out in search of clinic defenders. Under a tree opposite WomanCare, I found ten in orange vests. According to Kim Carpenter, el jefe on site, the Patient Escort Team was founded in 1989 after O.R. first hit San Diego; then, the problem was that while big clinics drew 150 people for defenses, small clinics drew none and thus were vulnerable. Now, "the problem of San Diego," according to O.R. leader Randall Terry, is that a network exists to shuffle defenders and patients among clinics as needed. Because defenders are trained as escorts to avoid debate, to leave the signs at home and focus on providing a service, Kim feels "it de-escalates the threat of violence" and denies O.R. the confrontation it depends upon. O.R. has prevented no woman from getting an abortion in San Diego since.

Still, the best efforts of the Patient Escort Team will not repeal the "gag rule" preventing federally-funded doctors from discussing abortion nor the state ordinances requiring parental consent for teenagers seeking abortions. Alone, the P.E.T. cannot prevent bans on federally-funded abortion and on late-term abortions from going through Congress next term. Nor can the P.E.T. provide abortion clinics to the approximately 75% of U.S. counties without them.

These are all victories for the pro-life movement. While Operation Rescue was stymied outside the convention, their political cohorts dominated within, forcing pro-choice Republicans from the podium or gagging them at it. The most dynamic pro-choice protest came not from liberals but from these excommunicated delegates, who organized a flotilla of about 30 ships to sail by the convention center with pro-choice banners.

It is a testament to the pro-life movement's strength that it now discusses "changing the culture, then the law," for only a group with a foothold can do this. With their own network of "family planning centers" to discourage abortions and families just waiting to adopt, pro-lifers are establishing a base no court can take away. Being in a

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city where it is socially acceptable to wear "Jesus is the Standard/PRO LIFE" t-shirts, where anti-abortion advocacy is met with silence, was chilling.

MEXICANS, DANCE, DANCE!

At Horton Plaza— an open-air shopping megalopolis where Republicans partied nightly under a big tent and the ægis of Planet Hollywood— the San Diego Area Dance Alliance placed dancers in select storefronts to catch the wandering delegate's eye. At the Express, I found five Eagle Talon Dancers, jerking like the Injun marionettes of penny theatres; I expected them to stop, the light dim, a velvet curtain fall when someone's quarter ran out. Outside Jessica McClintock— a boycott target until recently for its use of sweatshop labor— La Fiesta Danzantes did every gringo's favorite Hat Dance; in-store, Muzak drowned out their music so that shoppers could browse undisturbed.⁵

The day before these Mexicans danced, 2000 marched against Prop. 209, the CA Civil Rights Initiative— the vanguard in efforts to repeal affirmative action. The march began 2-1/2 months before in Sacramento, 750 miles to the north. Under the broader rubric of the Coalition for Social and Economic Justice, the march was called for and primarily organized by MEChA.

This was but the latest major action co-ordinated in recent years by California's resurgent Raza movement. The death of César Chávez and the passage of Prop. 187⁶ has galvanized Latinos as rarely before. Hunger strikes and massive marches have become almost routine; under-reported by the establishment press, they are part of the background noise to comfortable California living.

Latinos have long been California's invisible minority. Like Asians, they do not fit in the "black/white" dichotomy of race. Unlike Asians, the so-called model minority, conventional wisdom holds Latino achievers as exception— often, Anglicized as Hispanics and counted as whites— dirty brown hordes, the norm. And it is these hordes who do most of the work in California's invisible economy— in its fields, sweatshops, and suburban haciendas.

The CSEJ march highlighted the distance between California's visible and invisible societies. The march focused not on the metropolises but as Patrick Sanchez said, on "the communities politicians ignore...or where people don't want us...because that's where we have to go, not where people come to these rallies all the time." Marchers told more stories about Stockton, Manteca, and San Clemente than about San Jose, San Diego, and Los Angeles. The march registered 1000 voters and got 200 to sign cards pledging their vote against 209— estimates that considering the enormity of the event, seem frightfully low— but far more telling is the number of people who became citizens, guessstimated in the upper thousands.

Because the Latino population is large, growing faster than any other, and expected to overtake whites soon after the turn of the century, every California election comes with apocalypse-tinged predictions of a "brown wave" at the polls. However, since roughly half of Latinos— two-thirds in San Diego County— are denied the vote, either on the basis of age or citizenship, this has not come to pass. Still, as Latinos begin to win powerful seats and traditionally black districts become Latino, it is neither coincidence nor scapegoating that fully explains why 187 and 209 have appeared at this time. Most whites, and to a lesser but still significant extent, blacks are staking their futures on denying political and social rights to the people who will numerically supplant them. Many Latinos feel this; hence, their radicalism, especially of youth. How California's separate societies will be reconciled, when one so clearly seeks to subjugate the other, is not readily apparent.

THE HISTORY OF SAN DIEGO: A TOUR GUIDE

"The question is not whether we will be extremists but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? For the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice?" —Martin Luther King, Jr.

This question was set in stone opposite the convention center. Failing to get the center named after the good reverend, activists got the walkway along the trolley tracks instead. One sign informed passersby that this two-block stretch was the Martin Luther King, Jr. Promenade and that the unattributed quotes, set every few feet like grave markers, were his.

I spent most of my time on the Promenade in Children's Park, a year-old project that if appearances are any indication, with its bound trees and sculpted hills, its blue-bottomed pool and sand-colored stone, must have cost a pretty penny. The park afforded the best view of the convention entrance and thus, conventioners.

As I sat watching in





Children's Park, I realized that where the city had buried MLK, it had built the version and history of San Diego it wanted others to see. Picture the pool as the Pacific Ocean, the pipes aerating it as Indians showering gifts upon the white men who landed, overran the mexicanos' gapped fortresses (the sandstone blocks), and built their heaven—a land where every tree stands ramrod straight, where every mountain is a molehill to those who push on into the heart of the city. The park is a tribute to the human ability to manufacture an environment, to make nature yield.

Take the Promenade south into the Gaslamp Quarter, San Diego's downtown revitalization district. Restored colonial buildings stand on Missionesque avenidas, with plaques bolted everywhere to proclaim their historicity. Cafekultur has fenced off the sidewalk, making this a most pedestrian-unfriendly downtown; if you want to make a phone call or sit down, you'd better buy a latté.

This is by design, since the Gaslamp was once San Diego's flop district. It has the highest concentration of welfare hotels and military surplus stores⁷ I've ever seen, and among the chi-chi bars and bistros, you occasionally find a cheap diner that serves those who actually live in the neighborhood.⁸ I doubt these stalwarts can hold out much longer, under the pressures of gentrification and a city that would very much like to remove them.

In the weeks prior to the convention, several hundred homeless were swept out of the Gaslamp, into the warehouse zone between it and Barrio Logan. Homeless Advocates of San Diego claimed that arrests and citations of homeless people nearly doubled from the same timespan the year before, but police denied that any extra measures were being taken to clear the streets. A tent city on the lawn of City Hall was cleared after two weeks, with eleven arrests and no housing provided.

Further south lies Barrio Logan, San Diego's Mexican neighborhood. You know you're there when you reach Chicano Park, where Raza activists commenced their rallies and marches. As is typical of green space in poorer neighborhoods, Chicano Park is bisected by a freeway, but muralists have transformed the struts into art celebrating the Aztecs, Zapata, the UFW, Ché, and the Brown Berets, among others. The murals are a touchy issue, since the city considers them an eyesore too expensive to maintain; periodically, the neighborhood must mobilize to defend them.

In all the cityscapes the major networks painted, TV-watchers never saw the San Diego I inhabited for a week. Panning from the convention center to downtown hotels and out to the resort where Pat Buchanan decamped, television cameras never pointed down, preoccupied as their directors were with assembling a virtual city. Had they done so, they may have found the news Ted Koppel claimed to seek.

THE PARTY OF LINCOLN

Rounding a corner in the Gaslamp Monday night, I came eyeball-to-eyeball with Colin Powell. It wasn't the General himself but his head, giant and floating on the scoreboard-sized TV at the foot of Horton Plaza, for the unticketed to follow proceedings on C-SPAN. For the remainder of the week, the TV-watchers were mostly homeless, taking the opportunity to vent their spleen at party honchos (the week's best political commentary, as far as I'm concerned, came from a man who yelled, "He looks like a pimp!" when confronted with the gigantic loaf hair and big gold ring of Jack Kemp) but that night, 200 yupscale types gathered, virtually blocking the intersection to watch the General. Dwarfed by the TV, they resembled acolytes; I imagined them offering goats, wine, and first-borns while comely lasses filed around to serve and fan the Head of Colin Powell.

Say what you will about Republicans: dredging the party's post-Reconstruction past while conveniently ignoring their modern heritage, reconstituting themselves as the party of Lincoln instead of the party of Helms and Thurmond, at least they aren't afraid to put a black man in prime-time at their convention. Actually, they put two—Oklahoma Rep. and Baptist minister J.C. Watts also spoke, but the networks declined to carry his speech⁹—while the Democrats engaged in well-publicized handwringing over what to do with Jesse Jackson.

Consider, also, that the greatest initiative for racial reconciliation today comes not from the organized Left but from the Promise Keepers, a touring revivalist movement that fills stadiums with men of all colors, joining together to praise God Almighty and to rededicate themselves to His good work, reassuming the position they've abdicated to their wives, as the Lords of their manors. Extrapolating from my observations, I would say that a significant and growing

percentage of black Republicans come from the Baptist church and that they are, like the New Right in general, a church-based phenomenon. As moderates of both parties run against blacks—represented as welfare cheats, drug addicts, and criminals—to shore up the white vote, the Christian Right—once synonymous with the racist doctrine of Aryan Nations—actively recruits blacks and speaks out against racism.

That said, the number of black G.O.P. delegates actually declined this year—from 104 in '92 to 50. Latinos and Asians almost perfectly made up the difference, prompting one commentator to coin the phrase “country-club diversity,” meaning that there’s always room for a few colored faces in the G.O.P., so long as 90% of them remain white. Independent journalist Farai Chedya managed, unlike me, to find the black Republican caucus’s mixer; she reported a comical scene where delegates confessed they did not so much try to recruit more blacks into the G.O.P., this being a Sisyphean task, as to provide the few who approached them with more information.

Still, black Republicans are no longer a laughing matter. They were in my college days, when the same man came to campus every year, stumping for student support as he ran for a different position in the heart of South Central L.A. and inevitably lost. Now a J.C. Watts can win a largely white district in a conservative state. I wonder if the “black drop”—a well-documented phenomenon wherein black candidates may lose 10 to 15% of their support on election day, when white voters realize they just can’t punch the ticket for a Negro—is less pronounced for blacks who preach the new conservative gospel.

For it is this gospel, articulated both by many black Baptists and the Nation of Islam (albeit, in different ways, to different ends), that seeks to fill the gap in black America, left by the new Democratic party and the ungracefully aging civil rights institutions, such as the N.A.A.C.P. and the S.C.L.C. Black progressives find themselves locked out of the Democratic party, marginalized either in third-party organizations or academia, while the new gospel tries to put black women and gays back in their places. Consequently, the only black President I expect to see in my lifetime is a Republican. This would be the apotheosis of the inclusionist philosophy MLK espoused for most of his life, final proof that racism does not exist for a white society that does not care to see it.

JUST BECAUSE THEY'RE GAY

So ran the tagline of the billboard campaign P-FLAG (Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays) took out for the convention. Against backdrops like a preppie family barbecuing at their summer home in Cape Cod, P-FLAG wrote in all its flag-waving, tear-jerking glory, “Millions Can’t Share in the American Dream...Just Because They’re Gay.”¹⁰ Simultaneously, the Human Rights Campaign Fund released its ad

campaign: while pictures of Bob and Elizabeth Dole (previously divorced), Clarence and Virginia Thomas (mixed-race), and other couples flashed by, a narrator intoned that there once was a time when these marriages would have been illegal, too.

In the Doubletree Hotel, Log Cabin Republicans were debating whether to endorse Bob Dole, who several months before had made a public show of returning their campaign contribution. In '92, the LCR had refused to endorse George Bush for much less, but this time around, they decided that endorsing Dole would better serve their cause of transforming the G.O.P. from within, into a tolerant, gay-friendly party, if only Dole would accept their endorsement. He did, so Rick Tafel, head of LCR, set out to explain how Bob Dole had become their “champion of civil rights.”

The message from these gay groups? Let us enlist; let us marry; let us in; we’re no different from you. This is the inclusionist strategy gays have pursued of late. In the popular eye, Queer Nation and ACT-UP, with their positive expressions of queer difference, have been replaced by the Campaign for Military Service and family-themed Pride parades. An openness that celebrates queerness in its sometimes embarrassing diversity has been replaced by a preoccupation with putting the most telegenic faces forward and burying the rest. Sexual libertines have met Victorian moralists who believe that “sex positive= HIV positive”, as the two camps debate what is safe sex, what does cause AIDS. So far, neither side and neither strategy alone has succeeded in securing the rights and services gays deserve.

The polarization and disputes over queer identity threaten their movement for liberation and/or justice. For if queers are essentially different from straights, their queerness genetically determined, then a homophobic society would seek to correct them through science, removing the bad genes that make them wrong. If on the other hand, queers are essentially the same as straights, their

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queerness socially constructed, then a homophobic society would, well, do exactly what certain Republicans have proposed (with varying degrees of popularity): deny gays protection under the law; purge them from schools and popular culture; tolerate gay-bashing; permit gays to be institutionalized and "re-educated" against their will; withhold AIDS funding and medication; quarantine AIDS patients— anything to keep queers away from our children! In either scenario, queers are bad, immoral, and should be eradicated.

VOICES '96 —the progressive coalition initiated by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Task Force— tried to offer a way out of this quagmire. VOICES organized a march and rally for the cure, a march and rally for rights, forums for queers of all colors and ages, benefit lunches and a

dance for a variety of queer organizations— in short, as San Francisco Examiner columnist Rob Morse chirpily enthused, "a counter-convention."

Yet in the end, this convention seemed as vacant a spectacle as the one it countered, for after the marchers marched, the speakers spoke, and the people cheered, as everyone filtered away, no one could tell me what the next step was nor what had been accomplished, aside from vague notions of "speaking out" and "declaring our presence." If the measure of VOICES' success was the daily paragraph it garnered in the San Diego Union-Tribune, then it did not aspire for much.

I say this not to denigrate the efforts of VOICES organizers but out of the frustration I and most others on the Left feel at being consistently outflanked by the Right, as it assumes the mantle of revolutionaries and the rhetoric of the civil rights movement, to define the terms America thinks by. As I write, nearly a month before the election, the Dole/Kemp ticket looks like it will go down as one of history's greatest losers, but in the end, it may not matter; unchecked by independent, progressive, political organizing, the Clinton administration may do a perfectly good job of "finishing what Reagan started." And the G.O.P., having purged its dinosaurs in '96,

may field a bumper crop of young, telegenic, eminently electable candidates in 2000.

PROFILE OF THE MODERATE REPUBLICAN

"The one thing I have noticed, after attending conventions for the last 20 years or so, is that Republicans seem to behave better. I have observed that Democrats always come late, wander the aisles, chitchat with others, go to get drinks, and basically never stay in their seats. But Republicans come, sit in their seats, listen to speakers— and that's all they do." —David Brinkley
(quoted from the G.O.P. Web page)

In closing, I will sketch a profile of the beast we will likely see more of at the turn of the century. I do not speak of those moderates, particularly women, who are so turned off by the party's broadside against abortion and affirmative action that they will likely clip their noses and vote for Clinton this fall. Nor do I speak of those who find the thought of a woman living it up on welfare, watching soap operas and eating HoHos all day, so repulsive, especially when they are busting ass in dead-end, low-wage jobs, that they will support the party which takes the most initiative in doing something about it. No, I speak of those who when confronted with the reactionary excesses of their party, chuckle, nod, and say, "Yes. But..."

Their politics begins and ends with politeness. In San Diego, they waited for WALK signs, greeted every stranger with a "HiHowyadoin?", sandwiched every request between "please" and "thank you." For them each day is an opportunity to deliver 1000 little kindnesses, estranged as most of them are from the rudeness of work-a-day living. I saw them outglowing streetlamps as they fed their leftovers to the homeless, pleased to know that today, they did one thing to arrest homelessness. For aren't these problems best addressed one day at a time, person-to-person? Don't we count the souls we save on our fingers? And who are you to suggest that they don't care, that they are the problem, when the cinemas of their minds replay the thank-yous of so many grateful beggars?

So long as they tip well, how can you say they're exploitative? So long as they don't say, "nigger", "spic", "chink", or "faggot", how can you say they're prejudiced? Prejudice is rude, and bad for business. And what's bad for business is bad for America. But speaking of rude: black teenagers who shout bad English and play their music loud are rude. Mexicans who come to our country but don't even bother to learn our language are rude. Chinese who live ten to an apartment and "no speeka engweesh" are rude.

Now, the Christian right: sure, they've got their loony ideas, and I'd never support them if they went that far, but they're polite.

They're respectable people: they wear respectable clothes, have respectable jobs, form respectable groups, promote their ideas respectably: they're straight-arrow, letter-of-the-law, all-American types. Those shaggy, spitting protesters with hemp leaves on their shirts? They're rude.

If fascism ever does come to America, it will wear the blue shirt of polite people trampling the rude.

END NOTES

¹ Their forum, "The Big Tent," was scheduled not for convention grounds nor for any of the hotel ballrooms that throughout the week clogged with more white fat than a sclerotic artery. Rather, "The Big Tent" was pitched in the farthest reaches of Balboa Park at the Veterans' War Memorial, which a parkworker pointed out, "It's not very well-marked...It's where people go to train their dogs." When I finally found it, in what was to be hour two of the forum, the place was empty save a janitorial crew, which hadn't heard of the R.M.C. and didn't believe it existed any more than they believed I was a reporter.

² Which is not to suggest that others were bumped so that more Democrats could be added—a contention for which I have no evidence; certainly, none is forthcoming from those in charge of scheduling, if ever they could be unearthed from their bureaucratic burrow. But I wonder if every Democratic club from every single part of San Diego had to protest and had to do so separately. In general, I was surprised there was not more and more heated protest at the convention, but there are a variety of reasons for this, to follow.

³ Losing presidential candidates could address the convention but only through a joint pre-recorded video. Pat Buchanan kept to a 30-room resort in Creekside, rallying the faithful in Escondido, for which VOICES '96 could muster only a half-hearted hundred to protest. (Lest you think this constituted the party's repudiation of Buchanan, note (as he did) that the platform on abortion, immigration, and affirmative action is his, with only his most "progressive" initiative— lambasting corporate greed— excluded. Delegates seemed to accept the message but not the messenger.) Meanwhile, Govs. Pete Wilson (CA) and William Weld (MA), who threatened a floor fight for abortion rights, were bumped from the speaking schedule. For Wilson in particular, as governor of the host state, whose campaigns against illegal immigration and affirmative action presaged the G.O.P.'s, seeming only a year ago to mark him as a rising star, this was a grave put-down. Bob Dole had to intervene personally to get Wilson to the podium; he was given a minute to introduce Dole's wife.

⁴ In fact, the most vocal counterprotester I saw was not a choice supporter but a woman who screamed, "Fools! We should have MANDATORY abortions!" and uncorked a rap about population growth and Third World birth rates.

⁵ To be fair, I should note they were followed by a ballerina troupe's stirring interpretation of the Star Wars theme— the window-dancers were not all *ethnics*. By then, however, I was off on another assignment, seeing Independence Day, Bob Dole's idea of a good movie, in a Republican crowd. (I know it was Republican because they were not shy about

announcing themselves in their fine G.O.P.wear.) Contrary to what I'd heard, there was no cheering, no chants, nor flag-waving as we kicked alien butt; in fact, folks were pretty subdued, which is all that movie deserves.

⁶ The measure to deny "illegals" and their children public education and health care, like 209 the harbinger of national efforts to do so, 187 has since been held up in court, with many of its key provisions deemed unconstitutional. Nonetheless, it has succeeded in terrorizing immigrant communities. There has been a series of well-publicized deaths of children whose parents feared deportation if they went to public clinics and so were saving money for private care. This fear is not totally unfounded, since some pro-187 teachers have already begun asking their brown students for proof of citizenship. And the anti-Latino mood 187 fostered has among other things, mobilized vigilantes to patrol the L.A. and S.D. airport, ferreting out "illegals" by demanding ID from Latinos (which is to say nothing of police practices in their neighborhoods).

⁷ San Diego is, after all, a Navy town: cruisers and destroyers loom over the shoreline; through morning fog, they appear like off-shore islands. With twelve military bases in county limits and more on the way, San Diego is probably the only city in the U.S. to have gained from downsizing.

⁸ I recommend the Moon on 4th St. Where else can you get veal piccata for \$2.50?

⁹ The Christian Coalition's Ralph Reed declared this censorship by the liberal media, which he said could not accept Watts' message of hard work, personal responsibility, and faith, especially coming from a black man. Several times he decried this racism at the CC's Faith and Freedom Celebration, where Watts was a last-minute added speaker. Following the more awkward polemics of Dan Quayle and Capt. Scott O'Grady,

¹⁰ Which among other things, strikes me as platitudinous; by that I mean, it says everything and nothing at the same time: Will we soon be subjected to ad campaigns such as, "Millions Can't Share in the American Dream...Just Because They're Black"? Poor? Homeless? Disabled?

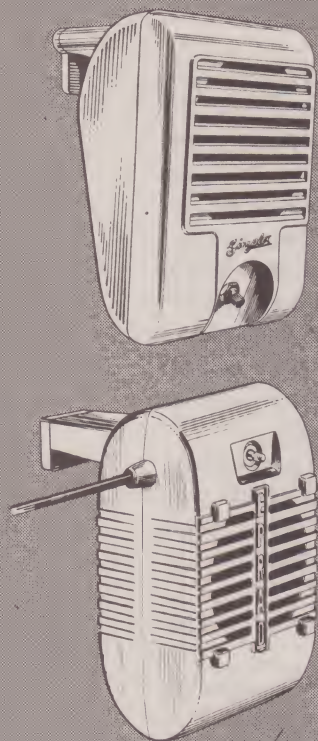
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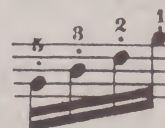
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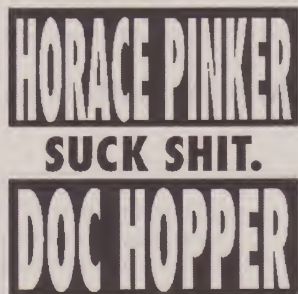
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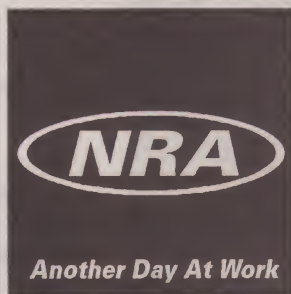
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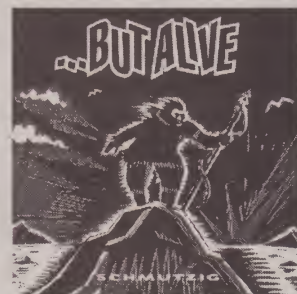
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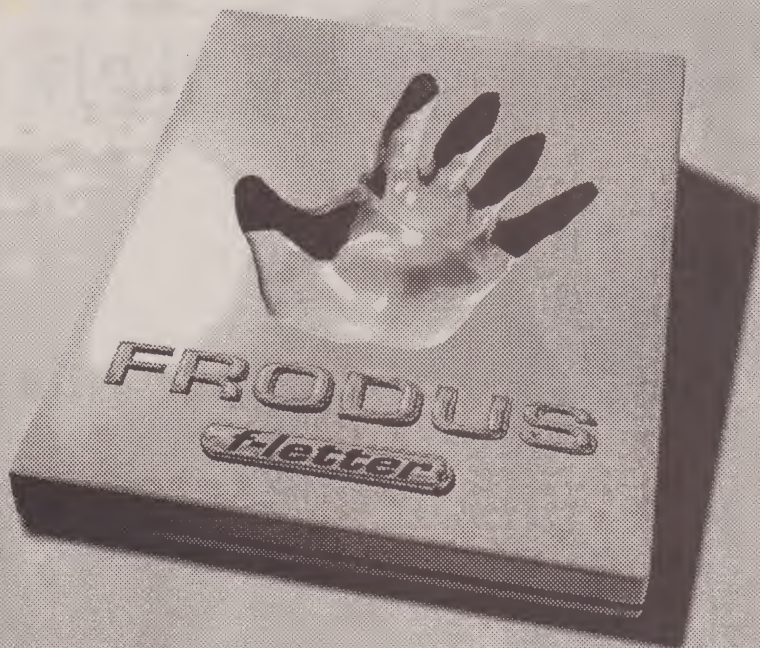
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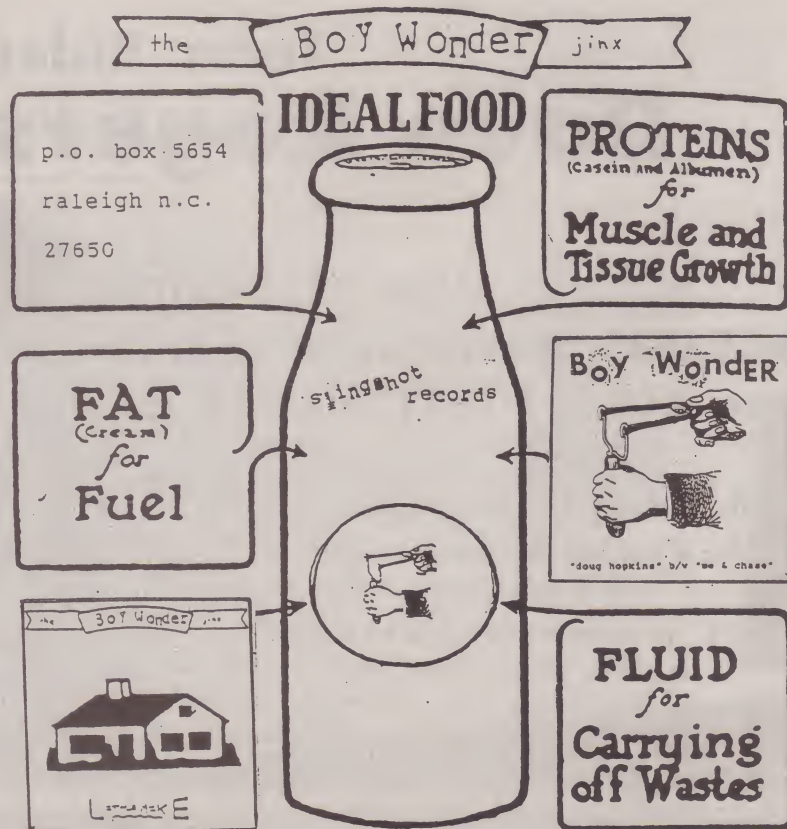


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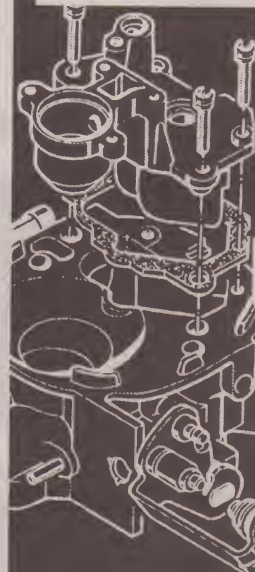
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I am the last person left on Earth. And I revel in the fact that you will never, ever reach me. And if that wasn't enough, I've got this beautiful song in my head, your glassy eyes still casually undressing me, and nothing to blame any of it on.

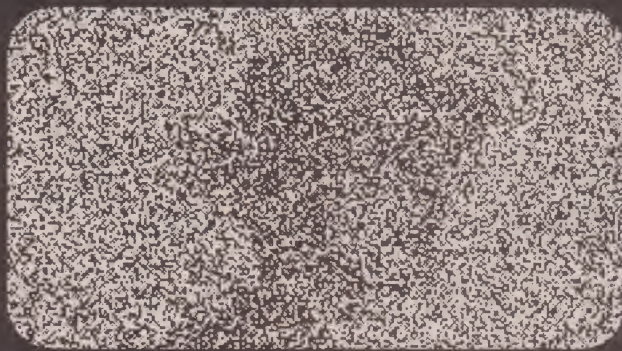
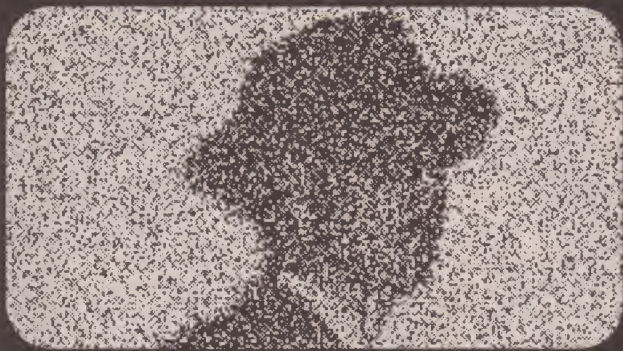
I cannot blame the road. Doing that makes absolutely no sense at all. It's just a grimy suburban strip. At one point it might have led somewhere, now it just winds me further into the same spider hole. Your face oversees it all, as if Mt. Rushmore rebelled, pierced its nose, and decided to preside over hell. A grim reminder of the exit I must take. No one does anything anymore. All I do some nights is watch our laundry sway from my bedroom window; I sneer when the neighbors think we're low class for not investing in a dryer.

I could have known all of this from my bedroom window, which tried to shield me from you. I thought you were so far away, forbidden territory for someone who rarely ventured far from home. Just as laughter carries for miles over water on a clear summer night, all the commercial disgust could have been mine as I half-dreamt. The trucks, just passing through, although for the life of me I couldn't understand why they didn't just take the turnpike. The lanes on this avenue are narrow and always disappearing and some idiot's always turning left in front of you. I could have heard them grunting and exhaling. Moving like barges; slow, steady, and with the confidence that nothing will ever change. Ha. I could have seen the lights. Not just the street lights which go on at a specific hour and extinguish all at once. You get the sensation that the power has just been restored and you think "How nice...that's good..." But there are also the store lights of yellow, red, and white. They creep out at night, one by one, and never completely die. At night they mix with the red streams in front of you and the penetrating platinum that bores through the back of your head. You'd swear it was Christmas. Certainly not you. Never you. And I cannot blame the road. Doing that makes no sense at all.

I find myself driving this avenue all the time. At first, I never went further than the place where I rented movies, or the store where I bought yarn. The rest of this mini-mall extension cord splendor seemed years away, yet it was just beyond the steep hill with the traffic light on the top. I always prayed that I wouldn't get stuck behind a red light on that hill. Except one time, I did. And nothing happened. This avenue, it never changes names, and takes years to get from one end to the other. Eventually it becomes some interstate, Route 100 or something. One link to outside. Outside of this room I'm trapped in, where you thought it would be fun to go one day. I guess it was fun for you. Anyway, I always exit before the toll booths, as if I am afraid of what lays beyond. I've never paid a toll in my life. I really only had one destination, we all did. There was no where else to go. And now, cruising this long avenue, I realize I haven't been this far down since then. I'm almost at the end, where we all used to go, every misfit along the avenue. Just a little place that was so small we couldn't help but injure each other as we pulsed to the pound-bang-pound. Nobody really minded. It wasn't much, but it was enough.

No one else can understand my enjoyment for this road at night: the beauty of the mini-mall lights which seem to support you like a million little fingers. It lets me believe that the world is dead, but will wake up soon. Now, before the daytime, but well after the soothing darkness is when I find it particularly revolting. There is not one other car and it seems as if the whole world quit their jobs and went to Bermuda. It leaves me free from social pressure, yet stranded because there is nothing left to rebel against. Trapped because all I do is drive from one end to the other, never quite reaching the end, and then start all over again.

It all seems so unromantic now. That parking lot (behind where we used to go), which I only knew as wonderfully dark and murky, gleams in the daytime. I



saw you there for the first time, your head bent over your knees as if you were in deep contemplation. I guess I should have known better. And inside, I would come whenever you were supposed to be there. Listening to you scream seemed as if you somehow had gotten J.S. Bach to harmonize for you. And then that one night, please say you remember my smile, and not my face. My face was twisted, somewhat embarrassed, yet sort of pleased. You told me not to leave. Why, so I could do it again? You never invited me down, but dragged me to your level. Oh please say you remember my smile.

I'm never late anymore. **Gone forever are those nights when I'm sweaty and satisfied.** Somewhat smug yet exhausted from acting bored. My hair tangled and my body bruised. All of these motions choreographed to that familiar pound-bang-pound. It's not one of those nights when my ears are ringing and I was supposed to be home an hour ago, so I know most of the lights will be green. This is the kind of avenue where hitting either all the red lights or all the green lights can make a 20 minute difference in how long it takes to get somewhere. A perfectly legitimate excuse for lateness, in my book. But now, that I have no where to go, I'll surely be on time. I could go all the way to the end of the avenue, to that place where I met you. And I could wait for fifteen hours, but it will not make a difference. The parking lot will remain blue and white, and no one will ever show up. That place is gone now, it up and left me around the time that you did.

Yeah, I could go there anyway (to make sure) but I don't think I'll ever be able to stop the car. You see, the pedals under my bare feet feel so gritty and rubbery that I have no choice but to keep driving. I always drive barefoot. It's like being able to feel the road. Yet I keep going so I don't have to feel.

A hazy summer fog makes a cloud over my vehicle. I am dizzy and lightheaded and I want to collapse. But something keeps me sitting upright, as if there are pins stick-

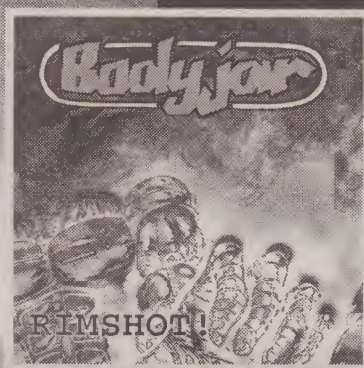
ing up from the back of my seat. Not the chain fast food restaurants and sleazy barber shops whose vibrant colors seem to pierce the fog. It is a condescending glare from six feet above my head, with eyes that are cleverly avoiding mine. Kind of as if you're trying to kill me, while, in effect, doing nothing but supervising my own downfall. As I lean back, the pain is never quite sharp enough, and my desperate hope that someday it will be forces me upright again. Always again.

The avenue is now muted, not commercial. The street lights were snuffed out with a sigh some time back, the sun is dampened behind the pollution. The lights are red now, but there's no one to catch me, no one to cut me off. I am a small girl alone in a Queen-sized bed. I have the entire road to myself and I accelerate gradually until I am coasting. Rhythmically rocking, undulating, as if I am slam dancing with nobody else around. You are pushing me forward, keeping me going. I no longer have the energy to hold my own ground. If I keep driving, somewhere I will find that place to go back to and the noise will soothe the silence that scares the pavement. A place where I could always see you, and you couldn't see me. Where at one time I was in control of my own life. All the pain and pleasure was once something I did to myself.

A few of the store lights have been left on all night. They peer out smugly and intrusively, like your spiky hair in my eyes. I feel your angular chin piercing through my back as we continue in this wicked death dance. I am looking for you out of the corner of my eye. Yet your demonic face has become cryptic and generic and follows me everywhere, even though I know I will never see you again. You probably wouldn't recognize my face in a prison lineup. I thought I had escaped, when you did. People say I'm the lucky one. You took the easy way out. You must have taken the turnpike, you fucker. I drive faster and faster and faster and faster; I do not know what else to do.

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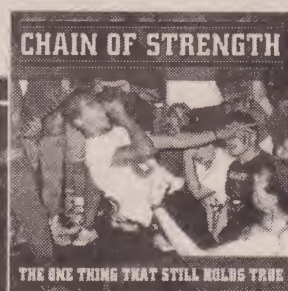
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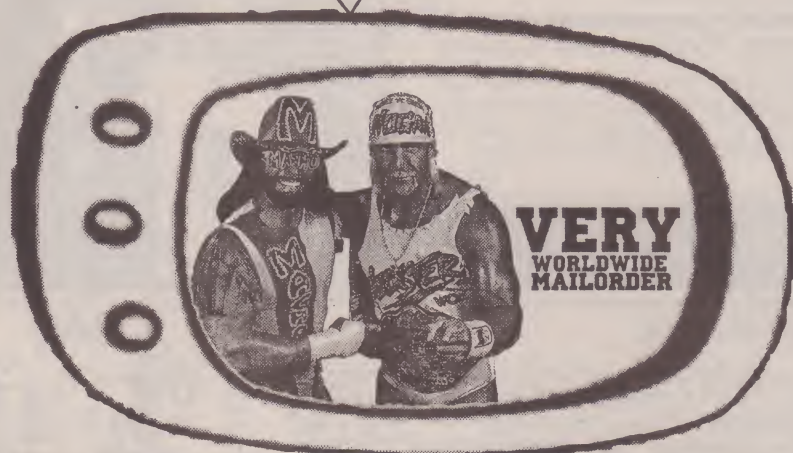
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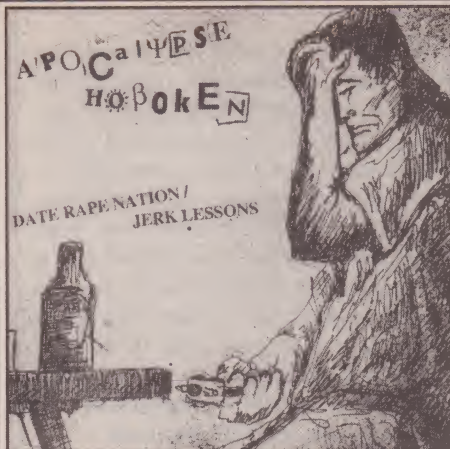
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By Searah Deysach

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- **an awl:** A pointy thing available at hardware stores and art supply stores. (WARNING: SHARP)

- A couple of good **needles** of varying sizes
- **thread:** This depends on how heavy your paper is. Embroidery floss is the best because you can vary the thickness by pulling it apart and you can buy it at fabric stores, hobby shops or dime

stores. But you can essentially use anything that will fit through the eye of your chosen needle: ribbon, quilting thread, linen thread, cat gut (yick!).

PAMPHLET STITCH

This stitch is real easy. Even your mom could do it.

- 1) Fold all your pages in half and crease that fold.
- 2) Mark three evenly spaced dots in the center of the innermost section. Poke through each of those holes with the awl. This will make it much easier to get the needle and thread through.
- 3) Cut a piece of thread that is at least twice the length of that fold.
- 4) Now, coming from the outside of the section, insert

the threaded needle into the center hole and pull it all the way through until you have about an inch or so of thread left outside. Stop. (fig 1)

5) Put your finger on that hanging out piece of thread so that you don't loose it. Push the needle from the inside out through the top hole, so you're out back by your little hanging piece of thread again. (fig 2)

6) Passing over the middle hole, enter in the bottom hole and pull your thread tight. (fig 3)

7) Now that you're back on the inside of the book, you'll notice that there is only one place for your thread to really go: back out of the center hole. So do it! (fig 4)

8) You should now have two loose ends on the outside of your spine. make sure that the long stitch is in-between the two ends and tie a knot around the long stitch. (fig 5) You can cut the thread real close to the knot or you can just cut the needle off and leave a little length of thread hanging off for a classy look. You can also tie things on those threads or leave them both real long from the beginning and make them tie around the front. Coolio.

Yeah, now you have a cool binding and that was pretty easy, huh? Now go nuts and experiment with different papers, threads and vary the number of holes. Have fun!

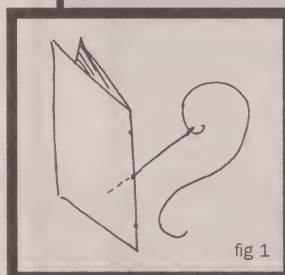


fig 1

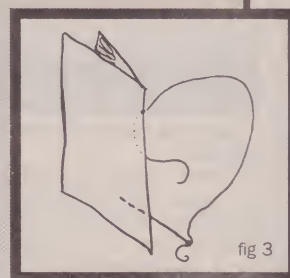


fig 3

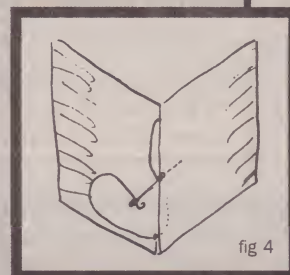


fig 4

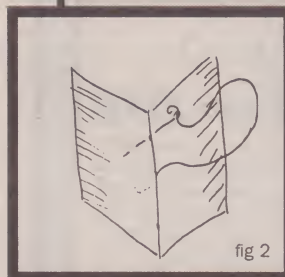


fig 2

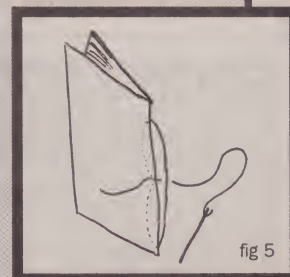


fig 5

HICKEY

LP (\$6ppd.)

HICKEY



OFF THE PIGS!

Hand screened front covers with 1000 different back covers. Each comes with it's own 14 page comic/lyric booklet. Recorded by Brother Nudelman at Big Rehab studios. It ain't hip garage rock, it ain't melodic punk or ska or The Clash, ...whatever. My supply of these won't last long, so cough up \$6 and join the revolution now. Indulge! Help the Naked Cult of Hickey emancipate us from the Honkey Death Culture. (Coming to your shithole town to liberate the masses this Summer).

PROBE RECORDS



"Domesticate It" CD (8ppd.)

The Bay Areas most monstrous and scary sounding band since Neurosis or Sleep. Actually, in real life they're young, pleasant, humanitarian types and the singer, Joe, works with little kids at an elementary school. He also does all the bands amazing artwork. However, there is a cop in the band (the academy just made him get his sleeve tattoos removed) but that's his problem. They have a really cute girl who plays a big mean-looking Warlock bass so that makes up for it. Ringworm is dark and gloomy with an up beat so the kids can be evil and dance at the same time.

YOUR MOTHER

"One Big Inside Joke" CD (\$8ppd.)

"I wasn't expecting very much, but then I listened to it and it FUCKING ROCKS! I love it! ... They're fast like NOFX, but you can't really lump them into the Fat category because they're more interesting and each song has enough diversity to hold your interest. Very witty lyrics." Athena, *Flipside*



This is my former roommate, Tracy, who wants to help out my little record label by offering up a full color naked photograph of herself with every purchase from Probe Records. If interested just mention this ad. If you prefer I can send photos of some ugly naked dudes instead and free stickers.

Death to False Metal! (Vol. 1) CD (\$8ppd)

Punk bands cover '80's METAL! (Venom, Priest, Metallica, Maiden, Dio and more!) Slated for appearance: Fuckface, Limecell, Rudiments, Hickey, Pansey Division, Muscle Bitches, Lost Goat, Schlong, Narcissistic Freds, Your Mother, Bottom Feeders, Randy (Sweden), The Neighbors, K.P.F., One Eye Open, Ditch Bank Oakies, Slackjaw, Thunderchimp, Towel, Bar Feeders, A Minor Forest and the Loudmouths. Coming soon, order now.

Order any three things and take \$3 off the total price!

"This ain't no fucking melodic punk" comp. 7in (\$3ppd.) Ringworm, Turboneger, the Loudmouths, Hickey, Whopper Breath, and Mensclub. I got about 100 left.

"Another Fucking Comp..." 7in. (\$3ppd.)

Fuckface, Charles Bronson, Plaight, Your Mother, and Yogurt-two of the Hickey guys.

Coming soon: "Seven inches of Sensitive Male", an acoustic split with **Matty Luv** and **Max**, a real tearjerker. / **Better Than Your Hand 7"**, an excellent female-fronted SF punk band / **Mental Pigmies-Whopper Breath** split 7" / and **Probe #6** later this year.

I will be spending the next three and half months of this Summer driving 18 wheel death machines up and down California's scenic HWY 5, night and day, seven days a week. (Got to pay for these ads somehow). While I'm away a fellow alcoholic, unemployed member of the N.C.H. named Kris Rockass will be donating her many talents towards keeping Probe Headquarters in operation -fightin' the MAN, offing PIGS, and collating Hickey booklets for the kids etc. A "big happy man" named Floyd will be doing the mailorder, ask him about his zine, Fat Punk.

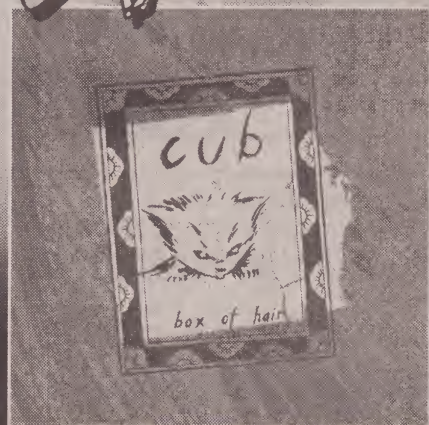
the Probe number five

The usual T&A, but it was the sight of my erect male member that scared away a large chickenshit distributor (not to mention a lot of penis sensitive and homophobic males) and left me with 500 extra copies for mailorder. Help me out. No age statement required (Fuck you PIG, go bust a real criminal. God forbid some kid gets a hard on or something). Full color cover, 100 pages, thick stock paper, cost more than a new car to get printed. "The Probe is one of the most indispensable zines of our time." -*Jersey Beat* "One of the most important zines in the world today." -*Thicker* "It's only about the best damn zine I've read in my life... though it's filled with naked women what really makes this zine is the quality of the writing. Incredibly well done, good lay-outs, good interviews. The scribes at MRR could learn a thing or two from this guy." -*Glossolalia* I'd much rather see a straight up porn zine... most of this is writing." MRR (\$4ppd.)

Checks to Aaron Muentz. Probe Records, PO Box 5068 / Pleasanton, Ca. 94566
phone/fax (415) 957-9369

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PHOTO BY RAEANNE HOLOBOFF



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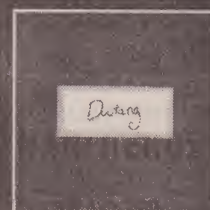
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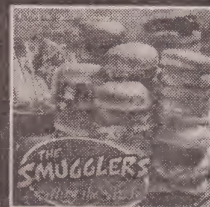
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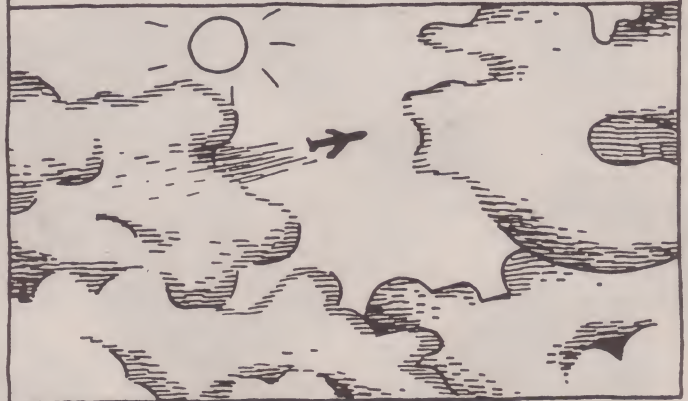
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DO YOU REMEMBER?

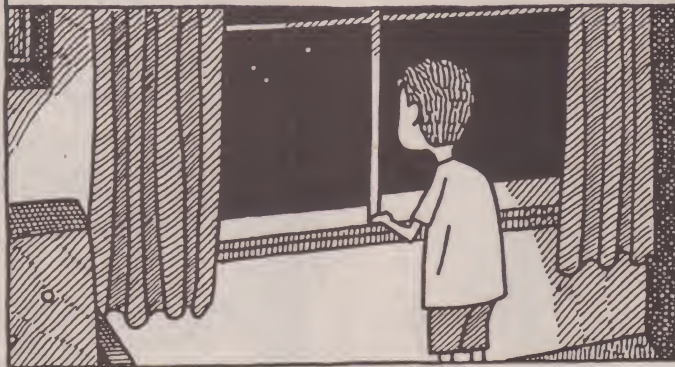
ALL THROUGH MY CHILDHOOD MY BIGGEST FEAR WAS THAT ANY MOMENT NUCLEAR MISSILES WERE GOING TO APPEAR FLYING ACROSS THE SKY TO DESTROY US ALL.



EVERY TIME THERE WERE SOUNDS FROM THE SKY, I HAD TO RUN TO THE WINDOW TO MAKE SURE IT WASN'T COMING FROM AN INCOMING NUCLEAR MISSILE.



MY FEARS WERE THE WORST AT NIGHT, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE ALL YOU COULD SEE IN THE SKY WERE A PLANE'S LIGHTS, AND WHO KNOWS, MAYBE IT WAS JUST A SLOW MOVING NUCLEAR BOMB.



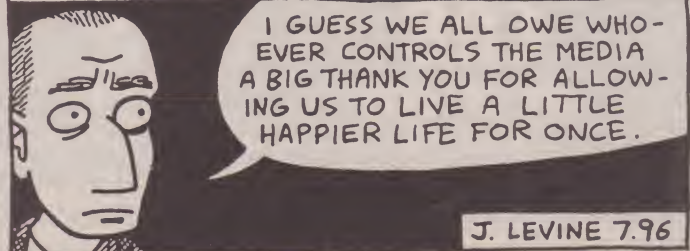
ALL MY DREAMS WERE FILLED WITH RADIATION SICKNESS, DESTROYED CITIES, WITH ME WANDERING LOST AND ALONE AND EVERYBODY I KNEW ONLY SHADOWS ON THE GROUND.



EVERYWHERE I TURNED IT SEEMED LIKE THE WORLD'S IMMINENT NUCLEAR DESTRUCTION WAS BEING SCREAMED TO ME, FROM SCIENTISTS, POLITICIANS, TELEVISION, MOVIES AND EVEN FROM MUSIC. I EXPECTED TO DIE AT ANY MOMENT... AND MY MOM STILL WONDERED WHY I KEPT FAILING MY MATH CLASSES.



BUT NOW THE WORLD SEEMS TO BE A LOT DIFFERENT PLACE. WHO WORRIES SERIOUSLY ANYMORE ABOUT A GLOBAL NUCLEAR WAR? NOT EVEN ME, BUT SOMETIMES I WONDER IF THESE PERCEIVED CHANGES ARE REALLY AS PERMANENT AS THEY SEEM. I MEAN, WHY DO WE ALL FEEL SO MUCH SAFER? WHY DON'T I HAVE NIGHTMARES ABOUT NUCLEAR WAR ANYMORE (NOT THAT I MISS THEM)?



I GUESS WE ALL OWE WHO-EVER CONTROLS THE MEDIA A BIG THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING US TO LIVE A LITTLE HAPPIER LIFE FOR ONCE.

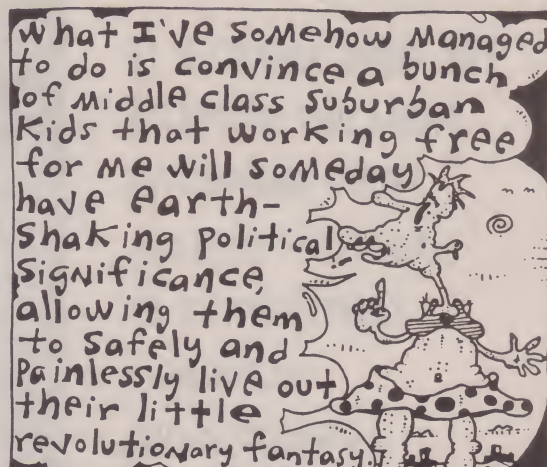
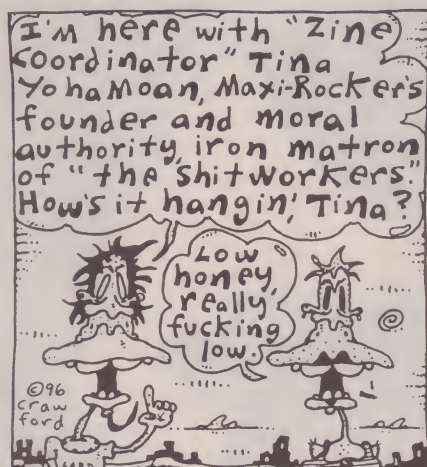
J. LEVINE 7.96



Have We Let Tina Down?

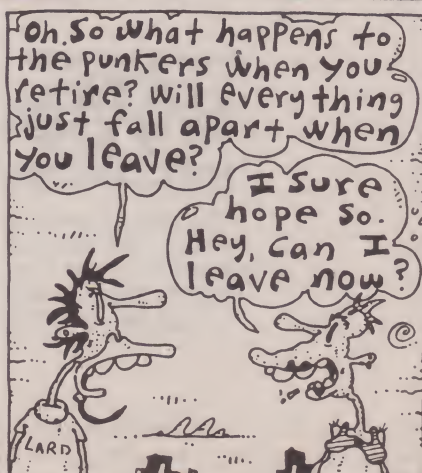
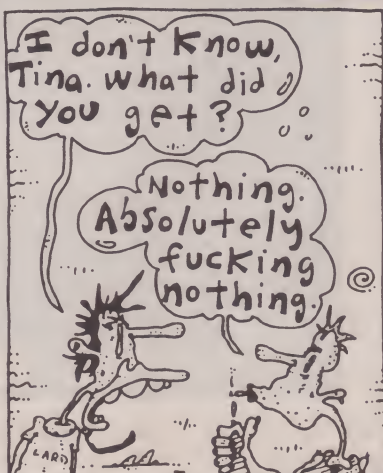
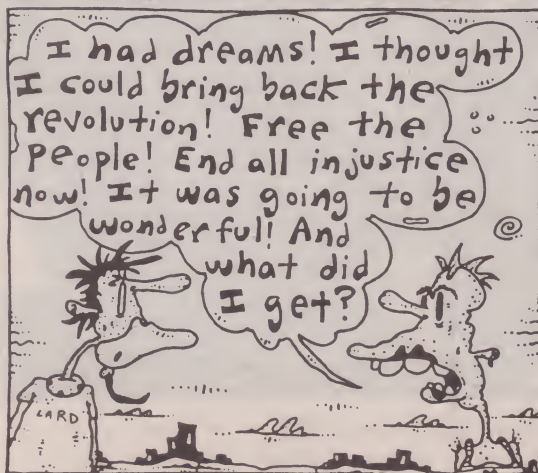
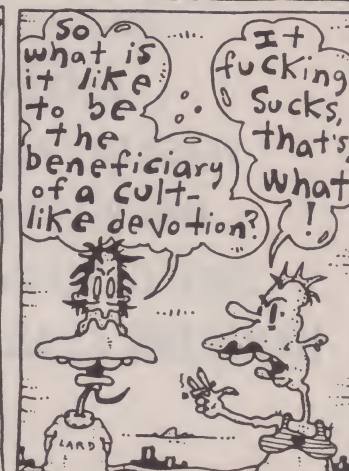
Ever Wondered how Tina ruled the scene with such ruthless efficiency all these years? And why so many followed her every whim so willingly? Baboon Dooley did. But when he asked Tina about it, he got an answer he didn't expect. Either that or it's just another excuse for yet one more episode of the famous:

Queen of the Scene!



Dooley: "There must be more to it than that!"

Yo ha moan: "well, ok, they do worship me as their punk god. you know, the original radical refusing to allow the banner to fall?"



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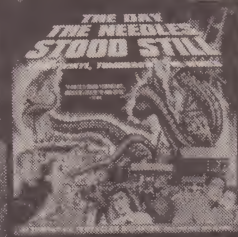


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Monosyllabic
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yeah yeah yeah

Record

Eric Action (EA), Kim Bae (KB), Darren Cahr (DC), Bob Conrad (bobe), Mari
Matt Miller (MM), Joan Pixie (JP), Bret Van Horn (BVH)

22 Jacks - Uncle Bob, CD

Sounds like it belongs with all those bands that have become radio-popular in the wake of Green Day — accessible poppy rock with an emphasis on the rock. It's not bad, but it's not something to get excited about. Oh, members of Wax, No Use For A Name, Adolescents and Face to Face. (SM)

(Side 1 / Dummy Recordings, 6201 Sunset Blvd., Suite 211, Hollywood, CA 90028)

Ack - Ack-me, CS

This is pretty run of the mill, Bad Religion type melodic punk. Fast, energetic music with drab, off-key vocals. I think what ruins this for me the most is not the crappy production but the vocals which are lackluster and never in tune. (KB)

(Rua Barao de Lucena, 115/703 / Rio de Janeiro RJ / 22260-020 Brasil)

Action Pact - Mercury Theatre/Survival of the Fattest, CD

This is a definite tough one. The first LP on this disc is great, very X-ray Specs very 1977 (though recorded in 1983). The second LP is very studio and is more 80's. Though this is a disc I would recommend the first 13 tracks are the only ones that I have repeated in the last few weeks. It is too bad there is no write up in the CD explaining the story of why this stuff was re-released. (EA)

(Captain Oi! PO Box 501, High Wycombe, BUCKS HP10 8QA)

The Adicts- Best of the Adicts, CD

Another Dojo reissue. I'm unfamiliar with these guys but they call themselves "Clockwork Punk" and dress like Wham on the cover. On top of that they sound like the Talking Heads.

This wasted my time. (GG)

(Dojo Limited)

ADR-Appalacian Death Ride LP

Ugh... really tinny country-crazy rock n roll.

Not exactly my cuppa. (DS)

(Anyway PO Box 82444 Columbus OH 43202)

After School Special - The Existentialist Blues, 7"

The A.S.S. is a very tight, catchy trio that should definitely be checked out - especially by fans of the Queers, Groovie Ghoules, Ramones...so on and so forth, et cetera... you get 7 poppy tunes with your purchase. Get 'em while they're hot...and before they're all gone. (MD)

(unheard records, PO box 423000 SF, ca 94142)

The A.G.s - This Earth Sucks, CD

This CD is a compilation of AGs 7's from 1989 to 1991 and consists of catchy, poppy, slightly perverted, songs. A must for fans of Pop.(MD)
(Ringling Ear 9 Maplecrest newmarket nh 03857)

The Aliens & Strangers- Go Go Goes Dragstrip, 7"

Bad, bad, baaaad greaser punk that did nothing for me. As far as I'm concerned 50's worship died with the Devil Dogs, so its about time for people to find a new decade. (GG)

(Space Race Records 8009 Rothford Lane Hbg. PA 17112)

Anti-Flag - Kill Kill Kill, 7"

Holy shit! This is amazing! This is the type of music that first made me fall in love with punk rock. "You'd Do the Same" would become an anthem if all the jaded lazy assholes out there would give this band a chance. All the songs remind me of TSOL (and late 80s early 90s punk/hardcore) but I'd have to say that this is much better and has more energy. This has all the elements of what I consider to be my favorite style of punk: lots of shouting and whoa-ohs in the background, fast guitar work (with some, but not too overpowering, 3 chord stuff - more technical sort of stuff), and a lot of variations and intensity in the song structures and elements. The production on this is pretty good too. This is by far the best 7" I've ever gotten for review. This band is perfect. (KB)

(PO Box 71266 / Pittsburgh, PA 15213)

Anti-Heroes - American Pie, CD

Well one of the longest running American Oibands has finally put out an album that should be really easy to find. The production is very strong and I am not sure if it is that, or the quality of song writing that has changed, because this is much better than I remember the two Link albums being. This is fast Oi, bordering on more of a street rock n' roll sound (ala The Bruisers), with a good recording, and plenty of variety from song to song. I have no problem recommending this to any Oi fans. That is assuming of course you don't mind the obligatory homophobic and nationalistic lyrics, but if you like Oi you probably don't mind them at all. You know...

(Taang / 706 Pismo Ct / San Diego, CA 92109)

Arise / Overcast - split 7"

Overcast is totally pretentious metal/hardcore with godawful lyrics ("you alone are abuse / you alone are pain") in that impending doom pseudo poetic way. Arise are much more creative noise/hardcore with really cool distorted vocals. Very chaotic but not very appealing. I want to know why bands that sound like these 2 have to write those shitty Megadeth-style lyrics. Please give it up. (KB)

(Moo Cow / PO Box 616 / Madison, WI 53701)

Arranca - Exile on Pain Street (Exilio Doloroso), CD

Well here's a nice change of pace — an intelligent, hummable, politically aware (though not PC), bilingual (half in spanish) indie rock album. Can't say that I ever expected to see the day. Hey, it isn't perfect, but it's pretty damn catchy, and quite entertaining (never heard "Guantanamo" as a punk song before). A rare thing — something different and good. (DC)

(Roquero Records, P.O. Box 18-005, Fairfield, OH 45018)

Arson Family-Demo

Blistering punk rock in the vein of early to mid-'80s stuff like Black Flag and all of the old Mystic Records bands. Well played and recorded, this is something that I've missed in the punk scene for a long time - no sensitive, whiny pop songs or emo chords here. Just plain old, kick-ass, pissed-off punk rock. (BVH)

(No Address)

The Ass Baboons of Venus - 7"

Music that you would find playing in the fun house at a low-budget amusement park. What else would you expect from a band called The Ass Baboons of Venus? Very strange. (SM)

(Stingy Banana Records, 335 E. 10th St., New York, NY 10009 USA)

Audrey - 7"

Like a slowly plodding and repetitious Pavement. Not without appealing qualities, but without enough of them to really get me excited. (SM)

(Peek*a*Boo, 2502 San Antonio #1, Austin, TX 78705 USA)

Automatics - In Disguise, 7"

Keep your eye out for the Automatics, as they will soon be taking over a town near you. This poppy trio is a perfect mesh of snotty punk and danceable pop - sure to liven up your next party. Buy this record before all of your friends do. Indeed a wise decision. (MD)

(\$3 42 Records, 3101 oxford valley rd unit #520, levittown OA 19057)

Avulsion/Laceration - split 7"

Oh wow... the world's been needing a record like this for a long time. Avulsion offers four versions of their blend of crust and death metal with dueling vocalists, one screams the other has that super low demon sound. Laceration, however, ham it up, proclaiming that hardcore and humor are not mutually exclusive (I agree). Songs like Duct Tape (saves my shoes, saves me money, duct tape: thank you.) and Crust almost made me split my gut from laughing. Eight songs here so you know the sound... Collector nerds beware, the first 100 are on white vinyl. (MM)

(Clean Plate PO Box 2582 Birmingham, AL USA)

yeah yeah yeah
yeah yeah yeah

Reviews

Davenport (MD), Greg Gartland (GG), Mark Hanford (MH), Scott MacDonald (SM),
Daniel Sinker (DS), Dave Larson (DL), James Burnham (JB)

Baby Sage - s/t, 7"

College rock circa 1991, which isn't exactly a slam, but more of a description. Self-consciously "clever" lyrics mine the same territory as They Might Be Giants without the attendant wit and/or musical talent. The vaguely tuneful music takes you back to those lo-fi, pre-Nirvana days pretty effectively. Not bad, though nothing you'd want to listen to on a regular basis. (DC)
(Rot'enroll Records, P.O. Box 912, East Northport, NY 11731)

The Beltones- Lock and Load, 7"

Aaargh! Cheesy bluesy greaser bowling alley punk. Another crappy Florida band. Aside from the OK Pink Lincolns, that state is beat. (GG)
(Far Out Records PO Box 14361 Ft. Laud., FL 33302)

Better of Airport - s/t, 7"

Can't review it, the record is so warped that it is plain impossible. The cover artwork is very DIY though, lot's of cut and paste, have fun. Send another one, please. (EA)
(The Generic Label PO Box 225 St. Cloud, MN 56302)

Black Calvin - Shooter, LP

Musically in the tradition of Killdozer and Mount Shasta, they'd sound entirely in place on a Touch & Go compilation. Lots of noise, well put together, with some interesting structures. Pretty cool, I must say. Driving drums, squeeling guitar — what more can you ask for, really? (DC)
(HC P.O. Box 32041, KC MO 64171)

Black Label - Year Of The Rat, 7"

This had some potential, but the tempo killed it. If it were faster it might have been decent crust punk, if it were slower and a bit fuller sounding it could have been sludge-core. At the droning mid-tempo speed it takes, this 7" is just plain boring.
(PO Box 442572/ Lawrence, KS 66044)

Blastoff/The Honeys-split 7"

The Honeys sound like a really lo-fi, minimalist version of Rocket From the Crypt with that singer from "The Monster Mash." Blastoff sounds more metallic/alternarock and tries to achieve a heavier sound. (BVH)
(\$3 PPD to: Rocket Protector Records 1514 Eagle Ridge Rd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87122)

Bleed - Hot Rod Racer, 7"

Macho, rockabilly-inspired, punk rock fueled by beer and fast cars. A very moving band, with snarly vocals matched only by the guy from Apocalypse Hoboken. Flipside will love 'em. (bobe)
(\$3 ppd. to Soda Jerk Records, PO Box 4056, Boulder, CO 80306)

Blueprint/Jimmy Eat World-split 7"

Blueprint's side is a really great song called In-Between Angels. Really great, honest slow-moving 'core that has good vocals and nice tempo/chord changes. Jimmy Eat World serves up two songs, that are equally as impressive, with really complex tempo changes, and volume switch-ups. This is a really inspiring, exciting split. (DS)
(Abridged Records PO Box 571221 Houston TX 77257)

Bollweevils / Walker split 7"

Bollweevils play fast pop-punk fairly decently, no lyrics are included but I am pretty sure it is about girls. Walker play the same stuff just slightly slower. This is fine for what it is, I guess, but you won't see me listening to ever again.
(Harmless Records/1437 West Hood/Chicago, IL 60660)

Boogie Man Smash/The Revelers-split, 7"

So like, is it the new thing to rip off the Monkeys? Apparently, Boogie Man smash thinks so. Maybe the Revelers think so too. The novelty is lost on me. (BVH)
(Inbred Recording Company: P.O. Box 14157, Cleveland, OH 44114)

Botch-The John Birch Conspiracy Theory 7"

Hello full-on crazy!! Singer's strangling himself, guitars are self-destructing, drums are exploding, and I'm loving it all. A crazy hardcore cover of the Carmena Burana (lets see most of you pull that off). Plus, the back cover has a very subtle picture of Oswald in the morgue, what more can you ask for? (DS)
(Phyte Records PO Box 14228 Santa Barbara CA 93107)

Boy Wonder - 7"

Interesting. No guitars. Sort of slowish alternarock. The vocals remind me of a cross between Hootie and Neds Atomic Dustbin. This is veerry suh-loooooow, of the heart-wrenching variety, very low-register heavy in both the music and vocals. Not exactly my thing. KB
(PO Box 5654 / Raleigh, NC 27650)

Broccoli/International Jet Set - split 7"

Broccoli play pleasant pop music that reminds me of Leatherface at times. The singer sounds like a young Frankie Stubbs... oh, and they're from Scotland. IJS also play very pleasant pop music. The singer tends to slur his pronunciations as Ari from Lifetime does... I like this record. (MM)
(Snuffy Smile 4-24-4-302 Daizawa, Setagaya-Ku Tokyo 155 Japan)

Brother's Keeper - The Continuum, CD

This band rocks that slow, metal kinda hardcore that seems to be really popular right now... While there is nothing outstanding about this band, they definitely don't suck. They have some good ideas musically; however the singer's voice grates on my nerves... way to high pitched. They guy singing back up on the song "momentum" should sing lead the whole time. (MM)
(Trustkill 23 Farm Edge Lane Tinton Falls, NJ USA 07724)

Budget - Who Poured Beer in My Shoe?, 7"

It took me a few seconds, but it suddenly dawned on me that these guys sound almost exactly like Zoinks!, right down to the singers phrasing. I doubt it was intentional, but it isn't a bad thing either. Pop punk played by competent musicians. This is a nice start and I'll look forward to hearing more of this band. (MH)
(Mindpower Records; PO Box 280483; Northridge, CA 91328-0483)

Buglite / Dust Bunny, 7"

Buglite plays sing-songy pop punk with some vocal harmonies. Dust Bunny has a bad name and plays immature, lo fi pop and some yucky ska. Both have potential, but I'm partial to Buglite. (bobe)
(Matthau Records, PO Box 1343, Brookhaven, PA 19015)

Buglite - Sorry to Disappoint You, 7"

I'm sorry too. I really like Mutant Pop records, and I love the quality Tim puts into the packaging, but honestly, the last couple of things I've heard on this label simply do not have the sound quality I would hope for. Buglite play songs about girls and school on this 7". It's melodic pop punk, and I have a feeling that if the sound quality was better — if the guitars were less muddy and more buzzsaw — this might have the ability to tear my head right off. In other words, the songs are really really good, but they don't shine through as much as they could or should. (MH)
(Mutant Pop; 5010 NW Shasta; Corvallis OR 97330)

Burning Defeat - Singlin' out the aims, 7"

Good, riff heavy stuff with a strong minor key undertone. Interestingly, these guys are from Italy — the second really heavy Italian band I've heard recently (Uzeda being the other). From the sound of it, they're pretty irritated in Italy too, which is a good thing. Kinda loud, kinda anthemic, pretty heavy, pretty good. (DC)
(Burning Defeat, c/o Andrea Ferraris, Via Galimberti, 1/A, 15100 Alessandria, Italy)



The "rhythms" on this

Caesars Palace- !Rock de Puta Mierda! CD EP

Fast Brit sounding garage punk, more rocking (along the lines of the Lee Harvey Oswald Band) than, say, the Registrators or the Mummies. Really good, it grew like a fungus on me. It will on you too I bet. (GG)
(Dolores Records Drottning 52. 411 07 Gbg Sweden)

Cars Get Crushed - Blue and West, CD

Jeez this is hard to describe... Think Klikitat Ikatowi mixed with Split Lip (or Chamberlain as they call themselves now), crazy huh? Unfortunately these guys aren't nearly as good as either of those bands but for some reason I kinda like it. Hmmm... (MM)
(Goldenrod Records (no address given))

Caught Inside - 7"

Very sloppy, uninspired punk (sometimes punk/ska) that at times is irritating because no one in the band can keep time. The vocals and bass follow the guitar melody constantly which bothers the shit out of me. The songwriting and talent are at a pretty low level here. The "rhythms" on this are the antithesis of rhythm. Ugh. (KB)
(Smooth Lips Records / PO Box 165736 / Miami, FL 33116-5731)

Ceillishrine-2, 7"

Now defunct Millwaulke band makes like Bastro on the A-side, covers a Smiths song on the B-side. The A side is nice and meaty, though not exactly distinctive, while the B-side adds nothing to the Morrissey/Marr original, other than a cool bass break. It's okay, all in all, and if they were still around I might say "promising," but they're gone so, as a final statement — it's okay. (DC)
(Foresight Records, P.O. Box 27152, Milwaukee, WI 53227)

Cheesecake-You're Soaking In It, CD

First, some background: once, I pulled out all my records, in search of a girl band who equaled Born Against or Milhouse or Tetsuo in vocal anger. Cheesecake won, with their song on the Stars Kill Rock compilation. Gone are the days of complete anger. Today, Cheesecake opt for quirky guitar, off-key vocals, and girl positive lyrics. Each song is a different world, and that is a good thing. It's all dissonant and cool. Check this out, Cheesecake is a band whose time has come. (JP)
(Girle, PO Box 86412 Portland, OR 97286)

Chickenshit / UG Man - split, 7"

7 songs on each side, 14 fucking songs total on a 7"! The 1st Chickenshit song is hilarious with some guy hooting and laughing in a high pitched voice over the music. The rest is really bad grindcore wannabe with mega distortion. UG Man is incredibly bad clean noise if you will. Nonsensical music. Very trebly. Horrible production. Reminds me of that band on the SST Chunks compilation with all the weird noises (can't remember their name at the moment). (KB)
(HG / 401 Hongo-M, 2-36-2 Yayoi-cho / Nakano, Tokyo, 164, Japan)

Chinese Millionaires- Juvenile Justice 7"

[Begin digression] I've always been a big comic book fan. I have lots of favorites, one of them being Alan Moore, scribe of Watchmen and Miracleman, et al. In MM, he penned the line "mine eyes have seen the glory." 'Course, he was writing about a nuclear explosion, but that's not the point. What's important is that in punk rock, mine ears have heard the glory — at least a few times, with bands like Bad Religion (pre Recipe For Hate), the new Bomb Turks, and the Rip Offs. When I play a Chinese Millionaires record, I hear the glory. [End digression] Wowzers, these guys are great yet again. The first Chinese Millionaires 7" was probably the best debut since the first 88 Fingers Louie rekkid. This new one here is where los millionaires are really separating themselves from the pack, upping the tempo, getting a little hectic in their songwriting but pulling it off like the gentlemen I assume them to be. This is downright essential listening for the true punk rocker. (GG)
(Flying Bomb PO Box 971038 Ypsilanti, MI 48197-0818)

Cletus-Grease, Grits and Gravy, CD

Cletus plays some damn catchy music with vocals that don't seem to fit in with the music so much. Speedy pop-punk music ala Epitaph/Fat Wreck Chords with vocals that sound disturbingly like Weird Al. Nonetheless, they make for some enjoyable, cool pogo-pop-punk tunes. I just keep waiting for them to whip out "Eat It" or "Like a Surgeon." (BVH)
(Johann's Face: P.O. Box 479-164 Chicago, IL 60647)

Clifford Never Knew - Cura Chroma, CD

Very bad indie-ish rock. (MM)
(Starfish Records (no address given))

Closed Third Eye - Semi Psuedo Sorta, tape

Ugh. Eighteen slow, sludgy screaming songs with distorted fuzzy guitars and sloppy drum pounding that hovers in between bad metal and old school punk. And it really isn't even that good. (SM)
(American Gothic records, Box 263, Hunter, NY 12442)

Coalesce - CD

This disc collects a previously released 7-inch a comp track that was never released and two live songs. Coalesce play that slow, metallic churning brand of hardcore. They remind me of Bloodlet with vocals that aren't so forced sounding. The first two songs (from the 7") smoke, the third (comp track) is good too but not near as good as the first two. The live tracks should have been left off because all you can hear is vocals and snare drum... I'd say if you have the seven inch already don't get this, but I'm glad I did. When does the full length come out? (MM)
(Second Nature Recordings PO Box 115434 Kansas City, MO 64138)

Cold Cold Hearts - "Yer So Sweet" +2, 7"

Screaming girls with primitive guitars. Catchy in a minimalistic way with stream of consciousness lyrics. Riot grrrls? Does it matter? It is cool. (MH)
(Kill Rock Stars; 128 NE State, #418; Olympia WA 98501)

Converge - Petitioning the Empty Sky, CD

The artwork on the insert is nothing short of disturbing. It looks like a forensics medicine book. Even though the design of the insert is beautiful, trying to read the lyrics gave me a headache. At first listen, I thought this was typical jud-jud, harmonized guitar parts, WROAWR! stuff that I have a hard time taking seriously but that I like on the same level that I like Slayer and Death Angel. The more hardcore songs (as opposed to death metal) like "Albatross" are just incredible, sort of like a fuller, more complex, and darker Born Against. Overall, I really like this disc even though I may laugh at some of the songs. These guys seem really talented and creative. (KB)
(Ferret Records / 72 Windsor Dr. / Eatontown, NJ 07724)

Couch Of Eureka "Year Of The Zombie" CD

Hey, I gave this band's 7" (which is included here) a bad review also. I really have to wonder if people are into the Lookout thing enough to by this? The fools. This is slightly distorted college rock with some pop-punk and grunge influences. I will say there is a fair amount of variety from song to song here, but none of it is any good.
(Lookout Records).

Crocodile God - Boss, 7"

Gawd, this is great. Ultra-catchy fast poppy punk rock. Great vocals, thick guitar, sing-along choruses... all on a five song 45 rpm 7". There's even a cool short acoustic song at the end. Reminds me a bit of Snuff. Two thumbs up. (SM)
(Crackle! records, PO Box HP49, Leeds, LS6 4XL, UK)

are the antithesis of rhythm

Dead End Kids - Elvis +2, 7"

The song "Elvis" blew me away. Great stuff. The two songs on the flip were decent old-school punkers. Fans of bands like Blanks 77 should really dig this. (MH)
(Pelado Records; 521 W. Wilson #B202; Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

Dead Silence-A Benefit 7"

This 7" benefits the Denver General Hospital Sexual Assault Program. A pretty impressive booklet filled with writing & poetry from women all over the US & a really cool wordcore piece opens the record. Unfortunately, the music is kinda cheezy arena hardcore. Big guitars, big drums, loud vocals. The heart is in the right place, the music isn't. (DS)
(Spiral Records Box 13 3124 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley CA 94705)

Deerheart- Queen, Worker, Drone, CD

I have no idea what is going on here. Industrial beats with Slayer vocals and weird guitar, played by guys who look like country singers or Amish people. This is awful. The humanity! (JP)
(Goldenrod, 3770 Tansy Street San Diego, Ca 92121)

Dirt Bike Annie- It Ain't Easy Being Stupid, 7"

This is so cool! I'm sure they hear it all the time, but they sound a lot like old Green Day. Before they sucked. When they were cool. This record has all the makings of punk rock heaven: cute lyrics, pop-punk hooks, and catchy tunes. The recording is great, and it was recorded in a bedroom! Rock on! Plus, blue vinyl and a sticker... I'm in love! (JP)
(Richie Records/Varg Records, no address)

Dirtclodfight/F.H. Hill Co. - split 7"

Two songs from each band here... Dirtclodfight being slow and sludgy and covering the Who's Boris the Spider. FHHC are faster and poppier but have a trashy kinda sound. Both seem to be good at what they do, they're just not my thing. (MM)
(Truk Records 1930 Placentia Ave. B2 Costa Mesa, CA 92626)

Discount - ataxia's alright tonight, CD

After spending a week on the road with this band I feel even more fortunate, now, for being able to hear well-executed music night after night for too short of a time. Discount is a thoroughly enjoyable band from the unassuming town of Vero Beach, Fla. They play melodic, meaningful, personal punk. They're young — the majority of the band is fresh out of high school. They have a gift most bands will never reach, an ability to captivate emotion through words, phrasings, layered tones, flowing rhythms and, if you've seen them live, an unimposing and shy stage presence. Like most younger bands, they're immature. Their influences — Fifteen and J-Church — are too obvious (thank god it's mostly unnoticed in the

vocals). Their mentors provide an adequate foundation, but Discount is ten-times either of those bands. They have an excellent thing going for them; I'm just looking forward to see what they can come up with next, when they develop a true sound of their own. Call it a selfish expectation, but I know I'll be waiting in anticipation. (bobb)
(\$8 ppd. to Liquid Meat Records, PO Box 460692, Escondido, CA 92046)

Discount - all too often, 7"

Ditto. (bobb)
(\$3 to Mighty Idy Records, PO Box 7756, Clearwater, FL 34618)

Dodge Dart - Something in my Eye, 7"

Tight, catchy, poppy, and danceable. buy this. (MD)
(truk records, 1930 Placentia Ave. #B12, Costa mesa, ca 92627-send SASE)

Disembodied - The Confession, 7"

Wow, this is really well done. The 7" cover is beautiful and sports some attractive photography. Throwaway emotional lyrics shouted over SxE style hardcore which, at times, can be pretty creative. The vocals are what really caught my ear though; high in pitch, sort of clean-sounding. My only complaint is the lyrics but aside from that, this is one solid hardcore 7". (KB)
(Moo Cow Records / PO Box 616 / Madison, WI 53701)

Dodgeball - 7"

4 catchy upbeat pop-punk ditties with a total glam singer. Lots of reverb and echo on the vocals which I usually don't like but sound pretty cool here. This is not your typical 3 or 4 chord pop-punk though, it's more like technical melodic glam punk if you know what I mean. I just realized that the singer is female (solely by reading her name on the insert) - these have got to be the most amazing and versatile, raspy and snotty female vocals I've ever heard. I'm totally floored. (KB)
(Goldenrod Records / 3770 Tansy St. / San Diego, CA 92121)

Dog Pound - King Dickley Cool, CD

Melodic, heavy but speedy, poppy punk. Some nice guitar interplay keeps this interesting. Lyrics are overall pretty decent, running towards personal politics with a few songs with silly themes like "meat is murder and murder tastes good." Strange production on the vocals got in the way of the music sometimes, but overall this is above average. (MH)
(Black Pumpkin; PO Box 4377; River Edge NJ 07661-4377)

Dogmatics - 1981-86, CD

Another re-release and this is good. Not great like it was in 1981-86 but in 1996 it is good. In less words the Dogmatics does not hold up over time. You get some acoustic stuff in here that was not the norm in the early 80's. Shredder must have their reasons but I have no idea why? Sloppy, fun and energetic but forgetful. (EA)
(Shredder)

Donuts N Glory - I Can Pee, 7"

Very well done pop-punk, three of four songs are about nothing at all. The other called "Jon" is the strongest song on this record, it is only hampered by one of those shitty pop-punk guitar solos.
(Pinkie /POB 99277/San Diego, CA 92169)

Dos - Justamente Tres, CD

Mike Watt and wife Kira do the double Bass thing again. Kira has a sweet voice that can be pleasant at times but I don't know it is no Minutemen. Mike lost a lot of respect in the last few years and this is the kind of thing that is fairly pointless now. I have the earlier Dos stuff and I think its much better. It is different though so you can decide on this one. (EA)
(KRS 120 NE State Ave. #418 Olympia, WA 98501)

Dub Narcotic Sound System - Ridin' Shotgun, CD single

Excellent mid-70s porn funk. Sounds like a blaxploitation film has taken over your stereo. Or the Average White Band. Or maybe, the Suburbs. Of course, I would appreciate a chord change from time to time, but hey, they've got a groove, and they're sticking to it. Lot's of remixes on the CD, some with words, all with the same insistent groove, with very rare modulations. Gotta respect it. No double parking on the dance floor, eh? (DC)
(K, Box 7154, Olympia WA 98507)

The Dyslexics - We Both Use It!, 7"

Lo-fi 4-track recording (but you can hear all the instruments) of raw mid-tempo punk. Nothing groundbreaking or terribly original, but this is still a pretty fun record. (MH)
(Jabba the Slut Records; 9 Carriage Way; Montclair NJ 07042)

Egghead - Knock Off That Evil!!!, 7"

Geeky spazz punk that is somewhat Screeching Weasel-esque. "Jetpack" is probably one of the best songs I've heard all year. The other songs aren't as good, but are still pretty cool. Pick this one up if you see it. (MH)
(Dizzy Records 30-28 34th Street Apt #4G; Astoria NY 11103)

Just plain

Elvis Disciples-Your Mom Don't Know How To Fuck, 7"

This is chaotic punk rock that sounds like there are five vocalists screaming lines like, "we would die for Boba Fett". It's fun and punk. You just don't get music like this these days, and I like it. Star Wars, screaming, fast and silly guitars, just keep rocking on. (JP)
(Wedge, PO Box 1146 Grass Valley, Ca 95945)

Endpoint-Catharsis LP

A reissue of Endpoints influential 2nd album. Endpoint played a very important role in transforming hardcore from the macho tougher-than-you eighties to the more 'emo' mid-nineties. This is definitely one of the 'timeless' records of hardcore. It totally defines a time (1992), and yet at the same time manages to rise above it. If you don't already own this, you should. (DS)
(Doghouse PO Box 8946 Toledo OH 43623)

Evel - The trial separation anxiety project, 7"

Evel is indeed an "electic style of hardcore," and I highly recommend it to hardcore aficionados. (MD)
(\$3 Foresight records, (checks to joe beres) PO box 27152 Milwaukee, WI 53227)

Everready - All Time Low, 7"

If you haven't already checked out Everready by now, then it is high-time, my friends. Yet another tight, poppy, trio brining you and your family three catchy songs - all with three catchy chords. BONUS - comes with FREE sticker. (MD)
(\$3.50 mighty ldy Records, PO box 7756 Clearwater fl, 34618)

Eversor- Time Goes By,7"

This band is talented, both musically and lyrically, but stylistically, they bored me. I really wish I liked them. Maybe it's something of the foreign gap, being that they are from Italy, but then again, maybe they just don't do it for me. As I said, they are talented and they play emo-core. (JP)
(Blu Bus, Viq Consolata N-14 11100 Aosta Italy)

Explosive Kate - It's Not Easy Being Stupid, 7"

Sloppy, Queens-styled punk with a garage-sounding recording. I respect their title's admission. For what this band is (which isn't much, and they don't claim to be), they aren't too bad. (Trickshot Records, 815, Rosedale Ave. Apt 1, Wilmington, DE 19809)

Falling Forward/Metroschifter-acoustic split 7"

Wow, punk rock unplugged! This is fucking awesome. Two bands playing acoustic songs. Being a sucker for both acoustic and good packaging, I'm totally sold on this 7" even though Falling Forward kinda sucks. The Metroschifter, on the other hand, continues to impress with yet another great couple of songs. This one has cellos in it. When's someone going to do a goddamn Metroschifter interview for PP, huh? (DS)
(Initial Records PO Box 251145 West Bloomfield MI 4825)

Fallouts - s/t, CD

This is an older LP that just came across our desk. The Fallouts are great garage, pop style stuff. Featuring some Mudhoney members you will be pleased. Most songs are less than 2 minutes and if you don't have this one, get it. (EA)
(Super Electro PO Box 20401 Seattle, WA 98102)

Farmacia De Guardia-TNT Pop Punk 1982, CDEP

Wow, see this is the kinda stuff that makes doing PP worthwhile: discovering that in 1982 in Spain there was a new wave band that influenced so much of modern Spanish rock music. This is pretty poppy stuff, sung in Spanish (duh!), very typical early eighties new wave pop that people would call "punk" because the singers had bad haircuts or whatever. This is totally great! (DS)
(Subterfuge Records PO Box 46055 Madrid, Spain 28080)

Fear-Have Another Beer with Fear LP

Just plain embarrassing. (DS)
(Sector 2 Records 2116 Guadalupe Suite 812 Austin TX 78705)

Felix- The Usual, 7"

This is a 5 band compilation 7" so here we go... Bladderbats- not bad, fuzzed-out, neat-o guitar. By far the best track on the 7". Boba Fiend- Screeching vocals ala crazed hardcore over pop punk music. Original. Yeah. Bottom- too rock. Philthshack-sounds a lot like Big Mistake gone rockabilly. Eh. Elixir- British sounding rock. 2 good out of 5, I'd save my money. (JP)
(Noisy Revolution, PO Box 155 Hull, Ma 02045)

Fluffy- 5 Live, CD

This has labels on it: the kind that say "property of record company" and "record company can take this back at any time", all sorts of legal crap. Only it doesn't say WHAT label, and it reeks of majors to me. If not, I could imagine this band, with their "we have limited talent but we try to sound like Hole" style, are aspiring to be playing in the majors. If not, well, I still don't like the CD and it still sounds like alterna-crap. (no address, but it belongs to someone)

Frank My Uncle's Band - Little Karen, 7"

Famous throughout Michigan for their great looks, FMUB will take you to the bar and drink you right under that table and call you names the whole time. Get this 7" cause its got some great simple songs on it and a cover of Negative Approach's "Nothing". On top of that it was recorded by the excellent Tim Pak of Angry Red Planet fame. Write them to get the 7" and to book a show playing to hundreds of kids. (EA)
(Dog's Blood Records, 4017 King's Lane, Burton, MI 48529)

The Frantics- Playing Dumb, 7"

Snotty punk rock ala Screeching Weasel or FYP (at their poppiest moments). This has all the elements of good pop- squeaky vocals, clean production, fun lyrics and an all over party feeling. Any band that can name a song, "Bad Little Boy" and have it not be a complete parody is cool in my book. This is punk. This is good. (JP)
(Wedge, PO Box 1063 Benicia, Ca 94510)

The Frantics- She's A Drag, 7"

This is the second Frantics 7" (or maybe it's the first? I don't know, I got two). Anyway, I can now say this is a consistently cool and quirky pop punk band with the obligatory song about a girl, and three other happy little songs ala the Queers or any other Lookout! bands. Only The Frantics are cooler cuz they're doing it small time. (JP)
(Wedge Records)

Frogger - Tiny Poonks CD

Screeching Weasel, NOFX, etc. (bobe)
(Subterfuge Records, PO Box 46055, 28080. Madrid, Spain)

The Gain/Scared of Chaka-split 7"

The Gain has a kick-ass raw mod sound mixed with a pop-punk feel. Good enough to rival a lot of mainstream crap, raw enough to still call it punk. Kinda like if The Odd Numbers had a harder edge to them. Scared of Chaka, as much as I hate to make the comparison, give off that Screeching Weasel feel. Although they have more of a lo-fi sound (and at times sound like MTX), they still playing catchy pop punk. (BVH)
(702 Records: PO. Box 204 Reno, NV 89504)

Funbox - New Theme, CD

Blistering fast, melodic hardcore. They could easily come from So. Cal. and sit on the Fat Wreck Chords roster, but, thankfully, they avoid sounding like the abused cliché this particular genre has become. If you're into the skater sound, here's another band for you.
(Crack Records, Suite 0116 #10, Toronto, Ont. Canada, M5J 1E6.)

embarrassing



Gasmask - Fear of a Red Planet, 7"

Holy smoke! This record explodes at you... communist and straight-edge ideals set to thrash played so fast that it sounds too fast on 33 rpm's. These guys have one-upped the almighty Assfactor 4 in the speed department. One of the vocalists sounds like a chicken or something, crazy. I have seen the future and the future is Gasmask. Stand aside or get blown away. (MM) (SOA Records (no address given))

Ghoti Hook - Sumo Surprise, CD

Well produced, hook-laden SoCal sounding punk rock. The thing is, this is propaganda for God. With the popularity of punk rock, it was only time until the Christians got into the act, and that's where Ghoti Hook and Tooth and Nail Records come in. Just as Stryper co-opted heavy metal and made it into something that it was never meant to be, T&N is doing the same to punk rock. Punk is about questioning the status quo, and Christianity (or, for that matter, most all religion) is about blind acceptance — they just don't go together — I'm sure at this point the folks at T&N are praying for me. But, if you only listen to punk for the music, then you should enjoy this. (MH) (Tooth and Nail; PO Box 12698; Seattle WA 98111)

The Gits - Kings & Queens, CD

A "live" in the studio set from 1988. Pretty good stuff for 1988, if only half the bands I end up reviewing now had half as much talent as this band I would be a lot less grumpy. It is hard rock with some grunge influences, early punk influences, and once in awhile the singer sings like some country singer I heard a little while ago. Not awe inspiring, but decent rock n' roll. (Broken Records / POB 460402 / SF, CA 94146)

Good Riddance / Ill Repute - It's only fun until someone gets hurt, split 7"

I like both these bands, but the Ill Repute side fell short of my expectations. Good Riddance, however, did not disappoint. Both bands play fast melodic So. Cal. punk/hardcore stuff, and hey, the Good Riddance side is good... (SM) (It's Alive Records, PO Box 6236, Oxnard, CA 93031-6326 USA)

The Goons-Bad Excuse 7"

Hello 1984! "I hate trendies, they make me sick/they can go and suck my dick." Old school punk rock with DK type lyrics (just not as smart). Seen & heard this a hundred thousand times before. (DS) (Torque Records PO Box 229 Arlington VA 22210-0229)

Grimcrack - Bad Day Every Day, CD

Straightforward punk, somewhere between real punk and that pop-punk stuff. Boring. (Stiff Pole Records/POB 20721/ St. Pete, FL 33742)

Ground / Self, 7"

Fairly good melodic hardcore from these South Carolina bands. (bobe) (Ambush Records, 188 Barnacle Cir., Lexington, SC 29072)

Habitual Sex Offenders - Cracked Rear Entry, CD

Simple mid-tempo lo-fi redneck rock. With songs like "I drink, she drives," "Diesel Dyke," and "I wanna watch", I could find few reasons to like this band, except for the fantastic cover of "Working for the Weekend." Still, one goofy cover doesn't save a whole CD full of shit from being just that. (SM) (Chicken Ranch, PO Box 1157, Ruston, LA 71273 USA)

Harvest - Incision, 7"

Heavy, kinda grungy, Black Sabbath, a little Helmetish, sorta like the Melvins sped up slightly. They sound like they'd be better live, though this is pretty good. In fact, a very good example of the sorta metal, heavy-shit genre. Cool. (DC) (Trustkill Records, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ USA 07724)

Hatebreed / Neglect - split 7"

First of all, the packaging is pretty bad so it's hard to tell that this is a split 7". Hatebreed is extremely generic SxE hardcore style music with lyrics like "await the crucifixion / no one is forgiven / everything precious lost" and absolutely horrid production. Neglect sound like a hardcore band with almost a rap-like beat. Formulaic sludgy SxE hardcore (don't know if these bands are actually SxE or not) at its worst. This is the most generic hardcore I've ever heard. KB (Stillborn Records / PO Box 3019 / New Haven, CT 06515)

Headman-The Morning LP

This LP sent my record needle skipping all over the fucking vinyl, which makes it really hard to review this. The snippets I heard between skips sounded like a blend of chugga-chugga hardcore & more technical oriented hardcore, with a Dwid-like singer bellowing above it all. (DS) (Green Records no address)

Highstrung, 7"

Pretty decent really fast power pop (?) punk that breaks down from time to time into mellow strumming just to break things up. Completely unoriginal in every way, but it is fast and done well enough, and the recording was well done. (House O' Pain/ POB 120861/Nashville, TN 37212)

Homegrown-That's Business, CD

This band goes in and out of styles like most people go in and out of underwear. That isn't a bad thing. At least it isn't a CD featuring the exact same song 14 times, with different lyrics, right? Homegrown is at their best when they are doing the Lagwagon/ NoFx type pop and at their lowest when they do a complete rip off of Rancid. Luckily, they stay on the pop punk side of the fence most of the time. (JP) (Liberation, 6633 Paso Del Norte, Anaheim, CA 92807)

The Hormones - 45RPM single, 7"

Side A "Castaway" is a fine tune but it was side B that got my curious. Here they do "All Kindsa Girls" by the Real Kids. Jerks, I have wanted to cover that song but did Reggae Reggae instead. Alright, they do not do it as well as the original it sounds out of tune or something but since it is such a great song it holds up just fine. If you like that kind of thing, garage of the 70s than do yourself a favor and pick this one up. (EA) (Empty Records PO Box 12034 Seattle, WA 98102)

I Against - The Problem Solved, 7"

I can't figure out if they got their name from a combination of Born Against and Sam McPheeters' Born Against eulogy called I, Yeast Roll, or if they're Jah revolutionaries. In either case, they play some decent political hardcore ripe with run-of-the-mill leftist lyrics. Maybe they'll get a photo in HeartattaCk? (bobe) (Fuck Boy Records, PO Box 779, Marshall, MI 49068)

Idiot Bitch - Here's an Album That's Guaranteed to Set Your Polka Feet A'Dancing, 7"

Pretty damn cool pop-core from San Jose, which is along the lines of Red #9 and the like. The songwriting is more varied than your average pop-punk, with melodic slow parts, interesting tempos, and speedy but tuneful fast segments. Enjoyable. They've apparently gotten a lot of flak for their name, but given that there is a female in the band, I would assume that it is some sort of social statement (or they just want the controversy). Interestingly enough, if there wasn't a female in the band, I'd probably slag them for having a stupid name. Not sure what that means though. (MH) (Wedge Records; PO Box 1146; Grass Valley CA 95945)

"the biggest drawback to this CD is the

Intro to Airlift, 7"

Oh boy, a Mod band! Intro to Airlift play jumpy, upbeat music with clean-sounding guitars and singing vocals... just like any proper mod band. In places this sounds like ska, even.

Overall, a real enjoyable record. (SM)

(Red Dawg, PO Box 2192, Bloomington, IN 47402 USA)

J Church - Kittums in a coma, 7"

Just what you'd expect from J-Church: catchy, three chord delightfulness. This 7" features faithful covers of "Girlfriend in a Coma," by the Smiths, and "Creep," by Radiohead. Well worth your time and money. A re-release. (MD) (broken rekids; PO box 460402 SF, ca 94146)

The Joykiller-Static, CD

I really wasn't sure what to expect from this, since most everything Jack Grisham had previously done since TSOL pretty much sucked. But, being a huge fan of old TSOL (not the shitty glam rock, post-Grisham period), I had to give it a listen. What I got was 14 songs of pure classic punk rock bliss, with the trademark keyboards and ever-present Grishamesque crooning that made me such a fan of TSOL in the first place. At times they fall into a more mod/pop sound that invokes the spirit of The Damned. It's like a million kick-ass reunion tours without all of the annoying pretenses of a reunion tour.

Grisham has redeemed himself. (BVH)

(Hopeless Records: P.O. Box 7495 Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495)

Kingdom Scum - God eat God, CD

First of all, I have to say that this is some of the best packaging I've ever seen in a CD. A colorful cardboard folder contains a booklet and the CD, along with some postcard-size graphics. The Booklet contains writing on issues of culture, capitalism and spirituality, along with a host of other topics, all presented with clever graphics. Unfortunately, the biggest drawback to this CD is the music. Unlistenable technostyle stuff, with samples and soundbites throughout. Still, a very cool project that you should check out. (SM)

Eerie Materials, PO Box 420816, San Francisco, CA 94142, USA

Lee Harvey Oswald Band - Blastronaut, CD

A new one from a very underrated band. This one isn't hitting me like their first LP did. Would fit right in as an MTV buzz clip. This disc has some great tracks but seemed to become a little too formulated. Pick up their first album then if you want more get this one. (EA)

(Touch and Go PO Box 25520, Chicago, IL 60625)

The Let's Go's! - Rock 'N' Roll, 7"

A cheaper version of the Devil Dogs the Let's Go's are a great Rock n roll band. Three of Four songs have Rock n Roll in their titles. Did I say they are a little dirtier version of 50s Rock N Roll. On top of this they are from Sweden not a place known for their Rock N Roll. This is real good. (EA)

(Stiff Pole Records PO Box 20721 St. Pete, FL 33742)

Litmus Green - Do You Fear Something, CD

Generic, really sloppy old school punk/hardcore with 2 types of songs. 1: retarded themes. Title samples: "Go-Go Power Rangers" and "Toxic Shampoo". 2: songs with a social conscience with really horrible lyrics with the exception of "Queer Thoughts" which seems heartfelt and sincere. pass on this one. (KB)

(PO Box 5311 / Glendale, CA 91221-5311)

Log - My Evil Friend, 7"

Ultra wimpy college "rock." Acoustic guitars.

Keyboards. Whiny vocals. This does not rock.

"Blech!" says I. I suppose I could give them a little credit for the marbled vinyl and the nice cover, but overall, this is one of those "flush it" records. (SM)

(514 W. Third Ave., Columbus, OH 43201 USA)

The Long Tall Texans - A few Texans More, CD

Boy, just what the world needs, Englishmen pretending to be Texans. That's like Texans pretending to be French. Personally, my feeling has always been that this kind of self-conscious "homage" is best left to people who actually have it as a part of their musical heritage — especially when nothing new is added (hey, at least the Stones bothered to build upon the Chuck Berry riffs they were stealing). A song which could be racist or sarcastically anti-racist (I couldn't tell) called "Get Back Wet Back" starts the record like the Reverend Horton Heat on 'ludes, and that says most of it. Except for, maybe, the fact that they cover not just R.E.M., Martha and the Vandellas (which is, I have to admit, pretty good), Gary Glitter, The Clash, and others too obscure to mention. They're trying to be the reverend, but while they have the chops, they lack that certain "authenticity" (for lack of a better word) which separates a good band from a good bunch of musicians playing songs. (DC)

(Dojo, P.O. Box 281 Canterbury, Kent CT1 2BB, England)

Lucy's Fur Coat- s/t 7"

No lyrics or insert of any type (I hate that!), no cover even, just came in a plastic sleeve. I have to assume they are singing about nothing of any importance. I think I heard the chorus "where is the bathroom?" and I do believe the word "baby" (as in woman)) was repeated several times whatever... Well the music in forgettable, slightly hard grooving cock-rock, just ignore this record and perhaps it will go away.

(Goldenrod Records.)

Madball - Ball of Destruction, CD

For those of you who don't know about Madball, time for a history lesson. Once upon a time there was a NYHC band called Agnostic Front who were pretty fucking good for their first few releases. But like any other band who continues to play for too long, they started to suck... Highlights of classic AF records include vocalist Roger Merit yelling the guitar player's name before a screaming guitar solo (STIGMA!).

Highlights of AF shows included Roger Merit's little brother Freddy Cricien joining them onstage to scream his little head off. One day (several years too late in my humble opinion) AF decided to call it quits (although I've heard that they're back now, yippee... just what the world needs, another washed up punk band getting back together). Enter Madball... Freddy and Stigma join forces to suck even more... This band went on to spawn a bazillion clones that are even worse (although, you gotten give all those bands credit for something... it's hard to be worse than Madball). This CD reprints early Madball recordings including the "classic" first 7" entitled (you guessed it) Ball of Destruction. If you like Madball, get it, if you don't like 'em or haven't heard 'em, don't waste your money, go buy some old Agnostic

Front like Cause for Alarm or Victim in Pain. (MM) (1453-A 14th St. #324 Santa Monica, CA 90404)

MAOW - The Unforgiving Sounds of, CD

This is a pleasant treat. Poppy and catchy. Very girly in a great way, if that makes sense. That isn't to say that these three girls are girly but their music is the toughest that Mint has offered. Included is a great cover of Wanda Jackson's "Mean, Mean, Mean." Originally this band was Meow and had a 7" with that name so if you liked that you got more right here. Very suggested. (EA)

(Mint #699-810 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC Canada V53)

Mandela Strike Force-s/t 7"

Pretty fucking awesome. Really good noisy emoish/poppy core that makes you nod your head & kinda swing around. It's got some good tempo changes that aren't very predictable and nice melodies going on. Plus, a pretty funny prank phonecall. (DS)

(July 95 PO Box 274 Newport RI 02840)

Mark Brodie and the Beaver Patrol - The Shores Of Hell, CD

Canadian surf music. I must say that, as a big fan of Dick Dale and Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet, I was expecting to dislike this. Most stuff that tries to pass itself off as surf music is just uninteresting. This, actually, isn't bad. It could use more in-your-face production, but it's a respectable entry in the surf music shelf. I've heard better, but pretty promising nonetheless. Although, guys — try another key from time to time. Even the Ventures varied their attack from time to time. (DC)

(Shredder, 75 Plum Tree Lane, #3, San Rafael, CA 94901)

music



Mars Accelerator, 7"

A three song 45rpm of a band that plays a mix of noise core, shitty melodic alt rock, and grunge. Catchy at times, fucking annoying at others. No lyrics/insert.

(RxRemedy/POB85594/Seattle, WA 98145)

Marshes- Fledgling tape

This is amazing. I used to ask to review pop punk tapes. I received so much crap to review that I requested a change. I finally got it. (I'm much happier now, doing the garage thang thank you.) But somehow, through some strange miracle, I was sent this tape of near Jawbreaker clones — (isotope may be a better term.) — and it is an awesome piece of work, containing some of the best songs I've ever heard. Hints of aforementioned whores, as well as Trusty and Bouncing Souls abound. This isn't the most consistent album in the world — the good songs are great, easily the best I've reviewed. The bad, are, well, bad. Still, this is a special record, the kind that I am honored to recommend. (GG)

(Grass Records)

Maximillian Colby-s/t LP

Fucking brilliant. Slow building music that ebbs & flows like a river, turning rough in spots, and calm in others. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. Think along the lines of Unwound, with crazier vocals. (DS)

(Whirled Records PO Box 5431 Richmond VA 23220)

Maximum Penalty - East Side Story, 7"

This band is one of the many NYHC bands that have decided to reform, and like many of those, this band became more popular after they broke up. This is better than I thought it would be, in some ways it is better than they used to be. Hardcore that is heavy, but perhaps more melodic than most in the genre, with somewhat sung vocals with an obvious early Richie Underdog influence. Far better than anything Lament ever did.. Yeah some will still think this is cheese-core, and I understand why, but it should not disappoint old fans.

(Too Damn Hype(Dutch Motherfucking-East India)/POB 1520 Cooper Station / NY, NY 10276)

Maxiwagon - Calls in Sick, CD

Catchy, melodic up-tempo music in the vein of bands that are in the vein of Superchunk. A good rock band with punk influences, or something like that. Very cool packaging: a two-color cardboard cover in a silk-screened fabric sleeve. Numbered, too. Neat. A darn good CD. (SM)

(Omnibus Records, PO Box 4522, Davis, CA 95617)

Me First - Teenage Flatsy, CD

Um, I think this is supposed to be a joke but it's not very funny. Bad girly rock (no punk influences here), very mid-tempo, horrible droning harmonies. AND it has the worst packaging I've ever seen. It includes a CD tray card, a 1 sided insert (both with nauseating swirly graphics), and the CD all enclosed in a 7" baggie. What the fuck? Gag me with a fucking spoon. (KB)

(Broken Rekids / PO Box 460402 / San Francisco, CA 94146-0402)

Millionaires, 7"

Not quite the level of their Chinese brethren, but still damn good garage evoking comparisons to the god like Motards. A good band worth fighting through those moths in your wallet to get a hold of. (GG)

(The Millionaires 1626 N. Wilcox Ave. #406 Hollywood, CA 90028-6812)

Moonshake- Dirty & Diving, CD

Ouch! A tape loop band! This hit me like a lump of coal in my stocking. Is this "chill out" music for raves or something? I dunno, but very few readers will be interested. Still, this is supposed to be a melting pot we live in, and no one ever said it would taste good. (GG)

(C/Z Records Ltd. 4756 U. Village Pl. N.E. #469 Seattle, WA 98105)

Mr. T Experience - Night Shift at the Thrill Factory, CD

This has been out of print for a long time and thanks to Lookout! The kiddies can know get this one. I have had this one since it came out on Rough Trade 8 years ago and this was their second release at that. This is when MTX were at their best (Jon Von thank you). You know what to expect from them but this will be an extra treat. I was excited to hear the 5 bonus tracks. They are okay but definitely unfulfilling after listening to the LP part of the CD. (EA)

(Lookout!, the address is tattooed on your arm)

Murder Junkies-The Right To Remain Violent 7"

Yep... What happens when your idiot junkie singer ODs? You just go on & play the same boring music with another singer. Fuck this. (DS)

(Vital Music Records PO Box 210 NYC NY 10276)

My Pal Trigger - The Riverview Mentality, 7"

In the world of pop punk, a band needs to have a little something special to be distinguished from the masses of other pop punk bands. I don't know what that little special thing is, but My Pal Trigger have it.

This record is three good songs, reminiscent of Crimpshrine a bit. Good stuff. (SM)

(Mighty Idy Records, PO Box 7756, Clearwater, FL 34618 USA)

Mysterious Briefcase - Day By Day, 7"

Punks that dig metal will most likely enjoy this clear red vinyl release. Can't say that I'd pay four bucks for this, but then again, I've never been a fan of Metallica either. (MD)

(\$4; 2459 eastill DR, Jacksonville fl, 32211)

Narcissistic Freds/Bluntside-split 7"

The Narcissistic Freds have come a long way since their Split 7" with Zoinks!. Gone from their sound is the close likening to Screeching Weasel and now present is a more thoughtful and, dare I say, serious feel to it. Ahh fuck it, they just flat out rock. Bluntside is a little less polished but has their own original spin on the pop-punk sound with a notable guitar style and fast, catchy music. One heck of a 7". (BVH)

(Positive Poop Records: P.O. Box 10325 Reno, NV 89510)

National Guard- Star Spangled Losers 7"

Cool garage pop with a major Minor Threat influence. It sounds like Ian MacKaye for crissakes! I would have no qualms about taping this for friends I loved or enemies I feared. With every dime.

(\$3 from Smooth Lips Army Corps PO Box 165736 Miami, FL 33116- 5736)

Navel / Travis Cut - split 7"

Navel is sort of mediocre bubblegum pop-punk with semi-bored sounding vocals. This lacks energy. The second track reminds me of a listless Oblivion. Travis Cut is fast melodic pop-punk a la Face to Face. The singer even sounds sort of like FTF's singer except not as much vibrato or enthusiasm. Sort of boring AND they cover "Blister in the Sun" (can't bands find a different song to cover?). Ho-hum. (KB)

(Snuffy Smile / 4-24-4 302 Daizawa, Setagaya-KU / Tokyo 155 / Japan)

Negative Reaction/Sound Bite House, split 7"

Uuugh, what a waste of everything... (MM)

(Rot 'En Roll PO Box 386 Smithtown, NY 11787)

Ninefinger - 7"

These guys are slow and sludgy and feature Mike Dean from Corrosion of Conformity. But even if they were to improve two hundred percent, they still wouldn't be half as good as that band in their prime. Boy am I glad I didn't pay money for this. (MM)

(\$3 ppd. from Bacteria Media PO Box 2614 Madison Wis. 53701-2614)

“sterile squeaky-clean and way too radio

Nitro Junior - It's a beautiful day to die, 7"

Fast trashy garage rock in the vein of The Devil Dogs, etc., with punk influences. I'm not a big fan of this genre, but I thought this was pretty good. No lyrics, free sticker. (SM)
(Small Wonder Records, Box 3915, Carbondale, IL 62902-3915 USA \$4 ppd.)

The Offspring - reissue of some album from 1989

I have never been a fan of this group, but I must say that they were more listenable back when this album was put out. Buy this if you are a big fan; otherwise, don't waste your time. (MD)
(nitro records, 7151 warner ave. suite E-73E, huntington beach, ca 92647)

Operation Cliff Clavin - Freedom of Choice, CD

Okay, funny name, funny band. I normally don't dig this kinda thing. Goofy stuff but OCC does it so well that I did indeed like it, a lot. Nineteen originals and four very funny covers that I want to keep as a surprise. Simple, its good and its only \$5 ppd. for a CD so order it now. (EA)
(Plan it X 5810 W. Willis rd. Georgetown, IN 47122)

Orpheus Suns- s/t, 7"

The somewhat muffled recording doesn't do this band justice, but it's still good. This sounds like Jawbreaker, only rawer and punker. The lyrics go deep within, and this band has a lot of style. I like this. (JP)
(Turtle Box, Po Box 3537 Merced, Ca, 95344)

Outrageous Cherry - Stereo action rent party, CD

The first couple of songs are straight late 50's early 60's rock 'n' roll. The rest of the album is very slow with droning vocals and guitar, and hypnotizing, monotonous drum beats. A cover of the Smiths "Reel around the fountain" is included. I don't know, it's not bad, but I can't imagine anyone being excited about buying this album. Buy it if you like to wallow in self pity and depression and/or enjoy music that makes you want to. (MD)
(3rd gear PO box 1886 royal oak, MI 48068)

Overlap - 7"

Really fast melodic pop-punk (if I use this description a lot it's because a lot of new bands sound like this) complete with break down parts. Poignant songs about youth that aren't outstanding but the lyrics are sort of sad and touching in a sappy sort of way. Not bad, not great. KB
(Suburban Home / 2695 Colorado Ave. / Boulder, CO 80302)

Pain - Midgets With Guns, CD

Hmm, a jokey pop band with horns (neither ska nor punk)? Really youthful, clear vocals that at times tend to remind me of the poppiest All songs. This band is definitely different. The lyrics are very silly but not stupid. The title track is a cha-cha song ("I would hold you even if I had broken arms / can you make a tourniquet for a broken heart?"). The beginning of every song cracks me up. This is the most eclectic record I've ever heard, very hard to describe. Very talented musicians here. I wish I could write a longer review of this. (KB)
(Goggins Records / PO Box 2112 / Tuscaloosa, AL 35486)

The Paper Tulips- Vitamin C, 7"

A band that takes the formula Tribe 8 used on "Fist City" and slows it down? I had to check my record player to see if it was on 45 rpm. It was. So then I checked to see if it was broken. It wasn't. This is molasses rock. (Yeah! I coined a term!) (JP)
(Truk, 1930 Placentia Ave #B2 Costa Mesa, Ca 92627)

Plan A Project - use your head, 7"

Older Rancid definitely comes to mind, as does Operation Ivy. Hmmm... Fast upbeat punk with some ska bits and political lyrics. Pretty fun stuff, and a pretty good 7", but if you're looking for originality... (SM)
(13 Roacho, PO Box 163, Dumont, NJ 07628 USA)

The Peep Freaks, 7"

This name sure is tricky. I used to eat Peeps all the time. They were sugary and sweet, and cute too! But these guys aren't like that at all. They're gruff, mean, and pissed off. Kinda garagey, kinda cool, kinda nifty, and definitely worth checking out. (GG)
(Jigsaw Records PO Box 392 Morris Plains, NJ 07950)

Permanent Scar-Turnback, LP

Permanent Scar provides some encouraging melodic hardcore all the way from Italy. Highly reminiscent of long gone bands like Galleon's Lap and Shadow Season, this LP has a lot of feel and emotion to it. While the vocals are sung in English, the lyric sheet provides the lyrics in both English and Italian. My only grip is the sometimes wanky guitar riffs. (BVH)
(Green Records: Francesco De Iorio, Via Manicliadi, 14 Padova 35020, Italy)

Phantom Surfers - Istanbul/Tokyo Twist, 7"

What? Phantom Surfers on Lookout!. Doesn't make much sense and frankly, either does this records. Surf what else) and very unoriginal. I like other Phantom Surfer stuff but this 7" is too boring. Great packaging though. (EA)
(Lookout!)

Phantom Five/Penetrators, split 7"

Boring surf again. Bands like this ruin surf music in the 90s. Give me a band like the Satan's Pilgrims over these two any day of the year. (EA)
(Solamente #2-124 St. Mark's Place, Brooklyn, NY 11217-2015)

Piss Shiver - Tape

This is cruddy generic punk rock about drinking beer and smoking cigarettes... Oh, and guys... it's called a piss twitch. (MM)
(3811 West Pine St. Louis, MO 63108 Box #281)

Pop Sickle-Self-Titled CD

Pop Sickle features Rob Skinner, previously of Coffin Break. I was never a huge fan of Coffin Break and now it's looking like I'm not too huge of a fan of Pop Sickle. Treading on the way-more-poppiest side of things than Coffin Break ever did, Pop Sickle is representative of the "new" sound that seems to be a hallmark of the "new" C/Z Records since they were bought out or rescued or whatever it was by whichever huge company-sterile, squeaky-clean and way too radio friendly for its own good. (BVH)
(C/Z Records)

The Promise Ring - watertown plank b/w/ mineral paint, 7"

"Catchy pop songs with a kick," pretty much sums up this record. Well worth checking out if you have a few extra bucks, and the cover is very nice as well. (MD)
(foresight records, check evel review for address)

The Pullouts - A lot of Power Tool in a little Space, 7" *reissue*

After you dish out three bucks for this record you will jump for joy knowing that it could have dissipated for ever, but was saved by the illustrious Mu-Pop records. The Pullouts are a fast paced, poppy trio whose record is a fine addition to any collection. (MD)
(\$3 Mutant Pop Records; 5010 NW shasta, corvallis or, 97330)

The Queers - Bubblegum Dreams, 7"

Okay another Queers release and this one is good. Two originals and two covers (Beach Boys and Muffs). These boys have been around and have morphed and now are pop kings. Do yourself a favor find their early (pre-Lookout! Stuff) and buy this stuff and you will be a better person. What else can I say of this band that hasn't been said, really. (EA)
(Lookout!)

friendly for its own good



Ran - "John Says" + 3, 7"

A cross between Hawkwind and punk rock — an interesting and not necessarily repulsive hybrid. Catch as hell, and so accessible they'll probably "make it big". I leave it to you if that's a good thing. Oh, and they're from England. (MH)
(Snuffy Smile; 4-24-4-302 Daizawa; Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 155 Japan)

Randy- The Rest Is Silence, CD

I was suprised when I put this on. I've heard them before and they played pogo-ska, which was good...but this, this is excellent. This CD is incredibly fast pop-punk, placing them somewhere between old Propagandhi and NoFx. So fucking good. Fast, infectious, catchy. This Swedish band is doing this thing better than anyone in the US. Also, you get a nifty vegan recipe on the CD. You Go!!! The pick of the bi-month! (JP)
(Dolores, Box 129, 40122 Gothenburg, Sweden)

Red Alert- Breaking All the Rules Double CD

Cool package. One disc all old people, (this band is a punk geriatric ward) and the other featuring the band's sons. Musically I was reminded of Sham 69, but this one's a roller coaster — at times great and wildly aggressive and at others it felt like watching paint dry. I found that any song with an Oi was good, while those without had great potential for guitar solos. (A definite no no.) (GG)
(Dojo Limited PO BOX 281, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2BB, England)

Refused - Songs To Fan The Flames Of Discontent, CD

This is a mixed bag, the music is "better" than earlier efforts, but it also has much more of an American hardcore sound. Many sounds actually, traces of Strife, Guilt, Snapcase, and several other US bands are obvious, many of the riffs are basically stolen from those bands (I just heard a Quicksand riff). Therefore however, there is more variety to this album than their earlier works, which is the plus. I just wish they were as good live as they are recorded, they aren't even close right now. I just fear this is another one of those European bands that get big here in the US in the band's decline. Pretty decent, well produced, albeit unoriginal straightedge hardcore from Sweden.
(Victory Records / POB 146546 / Chicago, IL 60614)

The Rehabs - King of Hearts, 7"

Two song EP form the Rehabs that falls somewhere between the Devil Dogs and the Queers. Not a bad place to be I may add. Poppy but it has that 50s base that makes you wanna dance. As the sleeve says: Beer Drinkin' Meat Eatin' Rock n' Roll. Would have been nice to have had more songs though. (EA)
(Just Add Water PO Box 453, Clemson, S.C. 29633)

The Revellers-Better Get Hit in Your Soul CD

No matter how hard I try, I can't enjoy this stuff. Boring retro '60s/'70s rock and roll revival. (BVH)
(Inbred Recording Company: P.O. Box 14157 Cleveland, OH 44114)

Rhythm Pigs - Baby Falcon Getaway, CD

A fine new release by these old punks, who still aren't playing by punk's musical rules. The music on this is all over the place, with some jazzy cuts, a couple of slower rock numbers, and quite a bit of fast punk rock stuff. Even with the variety, it all blends together into a very nice album. Plus, I was afraid it might be awful, and fortunately it wasn't, so I was pleasantly surprised. (MH)
(Cool Beans!; 3181 Mission #112; SF, CA)

Rights Reserved-s/t LP

This album is incredible!! This is very reminiscent of the DC sound, back when that discription actually meant something. Hardcore that's catchy, vocals that are meaningful without being simple. Truly fucking incredible. Unfortunately, the record is being released after the band has broken up, which means that it won't sell well & most people will never be able to hear the incredible tunes that lay within. (DS)
(Assorted Porkchops records PO Box 4022 Wllmington NC 28406)

Roosevelt's Inaugural Parade-s/t 7"

Holy Shit!! This is an incredible 7". Reminiscent of Junction with it's split female/male singers and complex song structures, Roosevelt's takes the style further, creating wonderful songs that hit you from all angles. Definitely in the running for the best 7" of '96. Who's gonna interview these sukkas for PP? (DS)
(Initial Records PO Box 251145 West Bloomfield MI 48325)

Sauce - Why Can't You Be More Like My Stapler, 7"

Almost too clever for its own good, this is slightly-damaged college rock. I think there is something about San Pedro that does this to bands. Not bad, just nothing mind-blowing. Not worth more than a couple of listens to me. (MH)
(Hardtail Productions; 2302 32nd St #D; Santa Monica CA 90405)

Scaries- s/t, 7"

This is the most vocally uninspired record I've heard in ages. Everything is understated: the vocals, the lyrics, the music... blah. This is below average ska-surf with a cover that I think is offensive to women. Yuck. (JP)
(no address)

Scenic - Sage, 7"

Beautiful guitar songs without words, reminiscent of Felt and other mid-80s new wave/4AD bands — imagine the Smiths without a vocalist and you have the idea. Very good. (DC)
(Independent Project Records, P.O. Box 1033, Sedona, AZ 86339)

Scratch Bongowax-Dogpile on Liz, 7"

This California goof-punk/garage band drags out the title track too long for its own good. Outside of that, it's all pretty standard garage rock. Not my thing, but if you like this stuff, check it out. (BVH)
(\$3 PPD to: Mutant Pop 5010 NW Shasta, Corvallis, OR 97330)

Seven Speed Vortex - Drinking Flowers, 7"

Female vocals adore this 7" to the point of forgetting where you are. Could be a great K record release about three years or so ago, except it has more guts and more guitar. Four songs that sound a little different but in the way that keeps you interested not guessing. This is a band that could make a great LP. An unexpected treat. (EA)
(Starfish Records PO Box 9441, Cincinnati, OH 45209)

Sex Pistols - Mini Album, CD

Hmmm. So the Pistols are back and on MTV and all over the place. Very depressing and hilarious at the same time. A good friend of mine said it best, "Glen Matlock was never meant to be the coolest one in the band." This mini-CD of seven songs are great. Demo versions that catch more rawness than the Bollocks LP. I like these versions but would never give up the real thing. (CD)
(Dojo PO Box 281, Canterbury, Kent ct1 2bb, England)

ShoeGazer-Hey Turkey 7"

Old fashioned hardcore, fast & loud with big choruses & inane lyrics. Not bad, not great. 2 songs on a 7". (DS)
(Fidotrust Records 11461 Elizabeth, Norwalk CA, 90650)

Silver Scooter-7"

Man. Three of the most powerful lo-fi songs I've heard in a long time. At times, Silver Scooter reminds me of Superchunk, but the minimalist, lo-fi sounding pop edge provides a more innocent and endearing feel to it, not unlike Lync. I need more. (BVH)
(Peek-a-Boo Records, 2502 San Antonio #1, Austin, TX 78705)

"They didn't have room in the packaging for lyrics or anything like that, but there

Sisterboy - I wish to you, CD

Sorry guys, much better trance music can be found almost anywhere, and Psychic Youth did this particular kind of thing much better fifteen years ago. Really bad — must avoid. (DC)
(Magdatone, 10-03 48 Ave L.I.C. NY 11101)

Skimmer "All I know Is Wrong 7"

Fair, one of those penny a dozen pop-punk bands.
(Crackle / PO Box HP49 / Leeds / LS6 4XL / UK)

Slam Book - With Riddle & Shears, CD EP

Slam Book could fit in with the Olympia, Wash. scene, even though they're on the opposite coast. Their sound is moody pop, guitars that switch from acoustic to distorted, and slow tempos. Could also be Superchunk's opening band. (bobb)
(Lorem Ipsum Productions)

Smack Dab-Future 7"

Dance music for rejects from '60s surf-porno movies on acid. (BVH)
(HC: PO. Box 32041 KC, MO 64171)

Son of Leadfoot / Witch Throttle Gush and the Green Devils, split 7"

Son of Leadfoot are one of those college rock bands with the pop-punk style vocals that are so prevalent today. The music is solid, but just not my style. WTB&GD are much more annoying, its just bad rock n' roll with some bad recording "effects"
(\$3 ppd. or trade to Scotty/8948 S.W. Barbur Blvd #154/Portland, OR 97219)

Spazboy-Bladow!, CD

Your average goofy pop-punk CD here. At times, it reminds me musically and vocally of Cringer, but more polished. It's sort of a coming of age CD. (BVH)
(Immune Records: 9269 Mission Gorge Rd. #211, San Diego, CA 92071)

The Spitboy CD

The music is just what you'd expect from this now defunct band: hard, three chords with distortion "smoothed out" by angry female vocals - what you know and love from Spitboy. (MD)
(PO box 40185, Berkeley, ca 94704-4185)

Spliterface - severed from the world, 7"

Don't bother. You wouldn't understand, and wouldn't want to understand. (MD)
(winged disk records)

Starved & Delirious - Unproud, 7"

Speed. Anti-racist, lefty speed. Incomprehensible ranting speed. You know if you like this, you know if you don't. I thought it was fine for what it was — though I've heard better. Do love that song about chicken soup, though. (DC)
(Spiral Records, Box 13, 3124 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94705)

Strahler 80 - Das Kann Jedder... 7"

How to describe this... melodic, yet aggressive, with vocals that are not sung, but rather yelled or spoken loudly or something. Sounds like something I would have liked about ten years ago... There's a lyric sheet but they're in Austrian or German so who knows what these guys are singing about. (MM)
(Sacro Egoismo zHd Tiberiju Felberstr 20/12 A-1150 Wien Austria)

Submission Hold - Kamikaze Quagga 7"

Musically this kinda reminded me of Spitboy, who I used to like but then one day realized that the only reason I liked them was that they were female (shades of L7). Strangely enough, just like a certain Spitboy record, the lyric sheet is translated into several languages... There were lots of goodies stuffed in mine, vinyl sticker, a list of other SH releases, and some flyer about how you should give money to "spare changers" to help the economy. Are these guys serious? (MM)
(PO Box 21533 1850 Commercial Dr. Vancouver, BC V5N4A0 Canaduh)

Starmarket - Calendar, CD

A seven song CD by a Swedish band that sounds like they have been studying the songs on the US top forty radio stations. I wouldn't even call this college rock as it is too poppy for that. They didn't have room in the packaging for lyrics or anything like that, but there is plenty of room for a nice bar code and how to contact their manager. Stay well away from this fucking pile o' PO(o)p.
(Dolores Records/ Brottniggattan 52 / S-411 07 Goteborg / Sweden)

Sweet Baby / Brent's TV - Hello Again CD

A posthumous collaboration from the Dennery brothers. Sweet Baby's half is raw, retro pop punk. I'm partial to their first LP (direct from Warner Bros'), which has some of the same tunes as here, but this CD is a more comprehensive collection of their efforts, drunken or not. Although Aaron Cometbus' liner notes date in '94, I saw a Sweet Baby incarnate play some of these tunes just over a year ago, a great treat. I'm less familiar with Brent's

TV, who eventually became the Hi-Fives. You know them. Brent's TV appears as a more spontaneous and immature version of the Hi-Fives. In any case, this disc is ripe with rockin', girl- lovin' music, something like 300 songs in all. It'll help to pass a decent day in the office. (bobb)
(Lookout! Records)

Sweet Pea-Chicks Hate Wes, CD

Sweet Jesus, this scares me. Slow, noisy and grungy with a Lydia Lunch impersonator on vocals. (BVH)
(PO Box 453 Clemson, SC 29633)

The Tantrums - See you Later +2, 7"

Boy, this is it. Seriously, I could go on forever about this 7". No need to, the 60s were great but the 60s in the 90s is better. Get off your assessment and pick up this slab of wax. (EA)
(Bulge, PO Box 1173, Green Bay, WI 54305)

Theatre of Hate- He Who Dares Wins/ II CD

My third Dojo reissue this month, and easily the worst. This should have been forgotten years ago. It was cheesy, it had horns, it had to go. (GG)
(Dojo Limited)

The Three Johns - The Best of, CD

Apparently The Three Johns were "one of the classic 80's underground bands," according to the liner notes in this CD, and these 16 songs were the best from their several-album career. The music is quirky college-radio alternative type stuff. I found it annoying. (SM)
(Dojo Limited, PO Box 281, Canterbury, Kent OT1 2BB, England)

Thunders, Johnny - The Studio Bootlegs, CD

As much as I can say that this man is so important to the punk rock movement, this CD is not. Basically this is Dojo bootlegging the bootleggers. The music has a couple of good Heartbreakers tunes but the majority if this is later, older, Johnny Thunders when he was, er, out of his prime. Get the real stuff kids. (EA)
(Dojo PO Box 281, Canterbury, Kent ct1 2bb, England)

Time Bomb 77 - Protect and Serve, CD

Gee, I wonder what these guys sound like? I guessed it: pogo style punk. The music is really melodic and energetic but the vocals are drab and boring. This band fits into the whole pogo category so well (and I'm not the hugest fan of that style) that I can't really describe them any further. (KB)
(GMM Records / PO Box 15234 / Atlanta, GA 30333)



is plenty of room for a nice bar code

Trash Brats- Out Of The Closet, 7"

These guys look like butt-rockers!! And they're proud!! They put their big hair having faces on the cover!! The music? It's rock, with that 80's MTV thing going on. they should hang out with D-generation and spray paint their names on the sidewalk, too. I think they opened for Poison or Motley Crue and got booed, so they decided to go "punk". It didn't work. (JP)
(Circumstantial, 408 W. St. Clair #318 Cleveland, OH 44113)

Trenchmouth - The Broadcasting System, CD

Reminiscent of early Gang of Four, Trenchmouth have something interesting going on. It takes me back to the days when punk was more of an attitude, and not the music that you played — where bands that no one would even consider punk now were all part of the same scene. The music is not always tight, and the singer seems nonchalantly unattached to his subject matter. You will probably either love this or hate this. I think it's cool. (MH)
(Skene!; PO Box 4522; Saint Paul, MN 55104)

Ubisunt- Reflections tape

New York Hahd Coah comin' archya for the nine sickle. Keepin' it real for' the kids, finger pickin' and soloing their way to stardom among the Champion sweatshirted, baggy pantsed crowd. They're Earth Crisis fans if that means anything to you. (GG)
(Ground Zero Records 21 Lincoln Place, Walldwick, NJ 07463-1923)

V. Card - Pool Shark, CD

Like a slightly poppier Husker-Du with more gravelly vocals; or like a less melodic Snuff. Nothing really new, but definitely not the kind of thing that could be dismissed as "been done before." Good solid songs, nice packaging... and enjoyable CD. I like this. (SM)
(Allied Recordings, PO Box 480883, San Francisco, CA 94148-0883, USA)

Vein - CD

Oh my. This is metal up your ass. I can really hear the DRI and Motorhead influences. There are some really thought-provoking lyrics like "I hate my job / everyone that I work with / I hate my job / I wish they would all DIE". I mean, I still listen to this style of music that was released when I was in grade school but bad metal that was released in '96? Uh, no. I'll give them one thing: I laughed a lot while I listened to this CD. (KB)
(PO Box 210322 / Woodhaven, NY 11421-0322)

The Vermin- Hell or Las Vegas, CD

Cool modernist '77, not pogo like Blanks 77 or Bristles. More like the Stitches musically but sung in that bar style where everybody chants along. I liked it quite a bit. And it comes with matches. This disc wins on all fronts. (GG)
(Behemoth PO Box 27801 Las Vegas, NV 89126)

Vile Horrendous - Finely Tuned Brainwashing Machine 7"

What a great name for this band... spikey haired punk rock sucks. (MM)
(Vile Life Recordings PO Box 168 Bethlehem, PA 18016-0168)

Voodoo Love Mint - Something in French, CD

VLM play rhythmic, noisy, yet strangely melodic alternapunk. Doesn't do much for me... (MM)
(Angry Seed 2632 Stevens Ave. S Mpls, MN 55408)

Wasted Time - When it was fun, CD

This band sounds like a mixture of any Fat Wreck Chords band + Squirtgun with a bit of Mr. T Experience type vocals. Not a bad effort, but not terribly original. (MD)
(grass records/wasted time 7 bartley lane, w. sayville, NY 11796)

Webster- Static 7"

I always liked the TV show, now I like the band. Webster is sort of a garage version of a Mass Giorgini band. They're pretty good and have earned any comparisons to Scratch Bongo Wax they might receive. (3\$ to American Punk Records 802 S. Broadway Baltimore, MD 21231)

White - Life on the Ranch of Elizabeth Clare Prophet (isn't all it's cracked up to be), 7"

This guys win some kind of prize for the awesome title on this one (and the sandpaper packaging which ruins the 7" if you put it in wrong is a hoot). Unfortunately, I must report that the record is just generic noise rock that doesn't live up to the cleverness of the title or the packaging, though the B-side does rock pretty convincingly. It's okay, just nothing special. You got my hopes up guys. (DC)
(White, P.O. Box 607032, Chicago, IL 60660)

Yellow Brick Roadkill - 7"

Why, why, why do I subject myself to this? Bad recordings of bad ska-twined pop punk... complete with the pick-it-up's. And that's exactly what I'm gonna do, pick it up off of my record player. (MM)
(Bandwagon Records PO Box 44338 Tucson, AZ 85733-4338)

Zoinks!/The Gain-split, 7"

Zoinks! rocks in typical fashion with "Dirty Underwear" and "Page Five (Blue Violet)," complete with awesome harmonized vocals and tight, pop-punk grace. The Gain supply more sing along, mod-edged pop punk majesty. (BVH)
(Rhetoric Records: P.O. Box 82 Madison, WI 53701)

V/A - All the Punk Fit to Print, CD

Lotsa big names on this, so you know what you're getting from the start. Rhythm Collision, Lagwagon, Zoinks, Fury 66, Bollweevils, Skankin' Pickle and more. 13 bands in all, doing 15 songs. Best cut on here was by the Gotohells - cool buzzsaw punk rock that makes me want to hear more. I dig compilation CDs if they are well done, and this one is. (MH)
(Newspeak; 7095 Hollywood Bl #657; Hollywood CA 90028)

V/A - American Tragedy, a Benefit Compilation for Judi Bari's Case, 7"

Good, loud, obnoxious music of various kinds by various bands in support of a good cause. Judi Bari, an activist for Earth First, was crippled by a terrorist bombing (likely intended to "punish" her for her political activities. She was then put under arrest by an FBI more interested in discrediting the enviro movement than catching the criminal. Now suing the FBI (quite effectively, it seems) money from this compilation goes to help Judi and her family. Good, abrasive music too. (DC)
(Diffusion, P.O. Box 1881, Bloomington, IN 47402)

V/A - The Best Punk Rock In England, CD

Apparently, all the "best" bands in England sound the same, like NoFx a lot, and have no girl singers. Whatever happened to Huggy Bear or XRay Spex? Sigh... Anyway, like I said, think NoFx. Suffer stands out, though, playing Born-Against inspired indecipherable hc. Wahoo to them. (JP)
(Snuffy Smile, 4-24-4-302 Daizwa, Setagaya-Ko Tokyo 155 Japan)

V/A - Chicago Vs. Amsterdam, CD

Four song CD's are pretty useless, but Hopeless picked bands that could sell such a format. Try on The Bollweevils and 8 Fingers Louie from Chicago. After that you get form Amsterdam, Funeral Oration and NRA. Chicago wins hand down. The CD says, "This is an EP don't pay more than \$7.54." Am I missing the joke or what? For 4 songs that fit on a 7", I think that \$7.54 would be way, way too much. Pointless. (EA)
(Hopeless Records, PO Box 7495 Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495)

“It goes on and on and on”

V/A - The Crispy Chronicles, Vol. 1

A collection of 30 songs by 20 bands from San Antonio, intended to be a documentation of the S.A. scene. Obviously, this would be mostly of interest to S.A. people, but there is some good stuff on here. Mostly lo-fi recordings by mostly punk bands that I've never heard of. A cool project. (SM)

(Speed Records c/o Leighton Mann, 719 W Hollywood, San Antonio TX, 78212 USA)

V/A - The Cubic Minute, 7"

The second Sixty Second compilation, wherein ten bands do ten songs in ten minutes. As you can imagine, this exercise varies quite dramatically, from the cool to the unbelievably bad. Godheadilo and Amy Denio turn out some interesting minute-long compositions that stand out on their own, while Band of Susans and Borbetomagus fuck around uninterestingly. Ruins, as usual, kick my butt which some incredibly intricate one minute thingamabob, and Xerobot sound like a great, lost six finger satellite song. Worth getting for that alone. (DC)

(Coat Tail Records, P.O. Box 607032, Chicago, IL 60660)

V/A - Dear Mister Shanks, 7"

A 1994 compilation 7" with The 4-Squares, Finway Fish Camp, The Hitmen, and The Parker Brothers. F.F.C., The 4-Squares, and The Parker Brothers are all hard up tempo pop-punk, with F.F.C. being the best of them. The Hitmen are more of a hardcore-punk band that plays fast straightforward hardcore with sung vocals, I liked this song the best by far.

(Quincy Shakes/525 Wing Lane/ St Charles, IL 60174)

V/A - Diversified Chaos, CD

What can be said about a comp. with 22 bands with styles that range from standard pop punk to harsh, ugly hardcore? It goes on and on and on (bobc)

(Motherbox Records, 60 Denton Ave. E., Rockaway, NY 11518)

V/A -First Last, 7"

A four bands from PA compilation. Chase Squad are decent generic fast punk, very cleanly played. Kline's Island play boring alternative rock. Burning Ambitions are just an annoying punk band, yawn. Ox play real hardcore! fast and distorted, forceful screaming, aaah! a song that is the light in the blackness of this compilation.

(Chumpire/POB 680/Conneaut Lake, PA 16316)

V/A - Freak Town B.S.O. "The Killer Barbies", CD

This CD is a soundtrack from a movie I have not seen nor heard of. However, judging from the liner one can infer that the movie is bloody and twisted. In any case, this CD features Spain's versions of AFI, Rancid, and so on..pretty much the "best of" the Spain indie scene.

This one is for you cultured punk rockers. (MD)
(subterfuge PO box 46055/28080 madrid Spain)

V/A - Kansas City Hardcore Comp. Vol I, 7"

Hardcore? Well there are two bands worth the purchase but I am not sure about this being HC, but that is open for interpretation. The Break Ups and Sex Offenders give us two great tunes while Switchstance and Cretin 66 are easily forgotten. I don't know this is where I should put who sounds like what but if your a record fan and like comps than pick this one up they all sound a little different. Pop haters stay away though. (EA)

(HC Records, PO Box 32041 KC, MO 64171)

V/A - Land of Dirt, CD

This is a compilation of bands involved with the Feedlot Music Cooperative in Iowa City, Iowa. Like a lot of regional samplers, there is a lot of different styles on this, but all fit within the broad heading of "alternative" music (meaning no straight rock bands). It's mostly low-fi, and if I lived in Iowa City I'd probably love this for documenting the bands of a period, but as I'm not from there, this doesn't do much for me. (MH)

(Feedlot; PO Box 2850; Iowa City, IA 52244)

V/A -Lo-Fi Favorites, 7"

A compilation with Rock Band #47, Pussycat Flanagan, Ten Cents, and Princess Robin. I listened to these "lo-fi" song once each and then made a nifty blue vinyl ash tray by melting the edges and bending them up. It is really a cool ashtray, and I didn't waste anything!!

(Teen Patriot /POB 85073 / LA, CA 90072-0073)

V/A - The Lovitt Empire, 7"

God I fucking hate Monorchid! I've seen them twice and they fucking suck. The other bands on this comp are okay... Blue Tip being the stand-out. The Shivers and Frodus round out this bunch... It's all DC sounding, funny 'cause three of them are from that area. So if you like the new wave of DC bands, pick this up. (MM)

(Lovitt Records 5800 W Friendly Box 17358 Greensboro, NC 27410)

V/A - Oi! The Singles Collection Vol I, CD

If you know Oi! Then you know these bands and probably already have this stuff. If you don't know Oi! Then this is a fine sampler of the good, non-racist Oi! That is out there. Bands such as The 4 Skins, the Business, Cock Sparrer, The Oppressed, Blitz, The Partisans and more, more, more!!!! (EA)

(Captain Oi!, PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA)

V/A - Prototype, 7"

Woo Hoo! Crust, crust, crust! This little gem offers new material from the likes of Ulcer, Apartment 213, Default, Disdain, Unsettled and Will Dandy's new (and by the time you read this probably defunct) project Laceration. While I feel that whoever mastered this thing did a cruddy job, everything else is fine and dandy (no pun intended). Six bands, nine songs, that should tell you enough... (MM)

(\$3 ppd. from Clean Plate Records PO Box 2582 Birmingham, AL USA)

V/A - Start a Riot, LP

This comp is a virtual "who's who" in today's straight up punk rock scene, spewing forth great offerings from Defiance, Code 13 the Pist, Naked Aggression, Terminal Disgust, Civil Disobedience, Capitalist Casualties (who cover DRI!), Submachine (who cover Devo, boy am I glad to see that I'm not the only punk who likes Devo), Aus Rotten, and Thug. So if you like these bands, the answer is simple... get yourself a copy of this record. (MM)

(\$7 ppd. from Clean Plate Records PO Box 2582 Birmingham, AL USA)

V/A - Super Mixer, CD

As with any compilation, some of the songs are good, while other should be left unheard. Bands include Tina, Age 13, Knapsack, Supernova, Kill Holiday, and others. The cover is nice, but the music is not spectacular. (MD)

(\$8 goldenrod records 3770 tansy St. San Diego, ca 92121)

V/A - Ultimate Slow Beats, CD

You know, the idea behind compilations is great. And this one in particular gives a scene thorough exposure with some 19 bands in all. But listening to such a variety of styles over an hour's time makes listening to comps a chore. Each band eventually gets lost in the shuffle. This comp suffers from this problem. If you want to expose yourself to Japanese punk and hardcore bands, you'll want to give this a listen, but it may not prove all too pleasurable. (bobc)

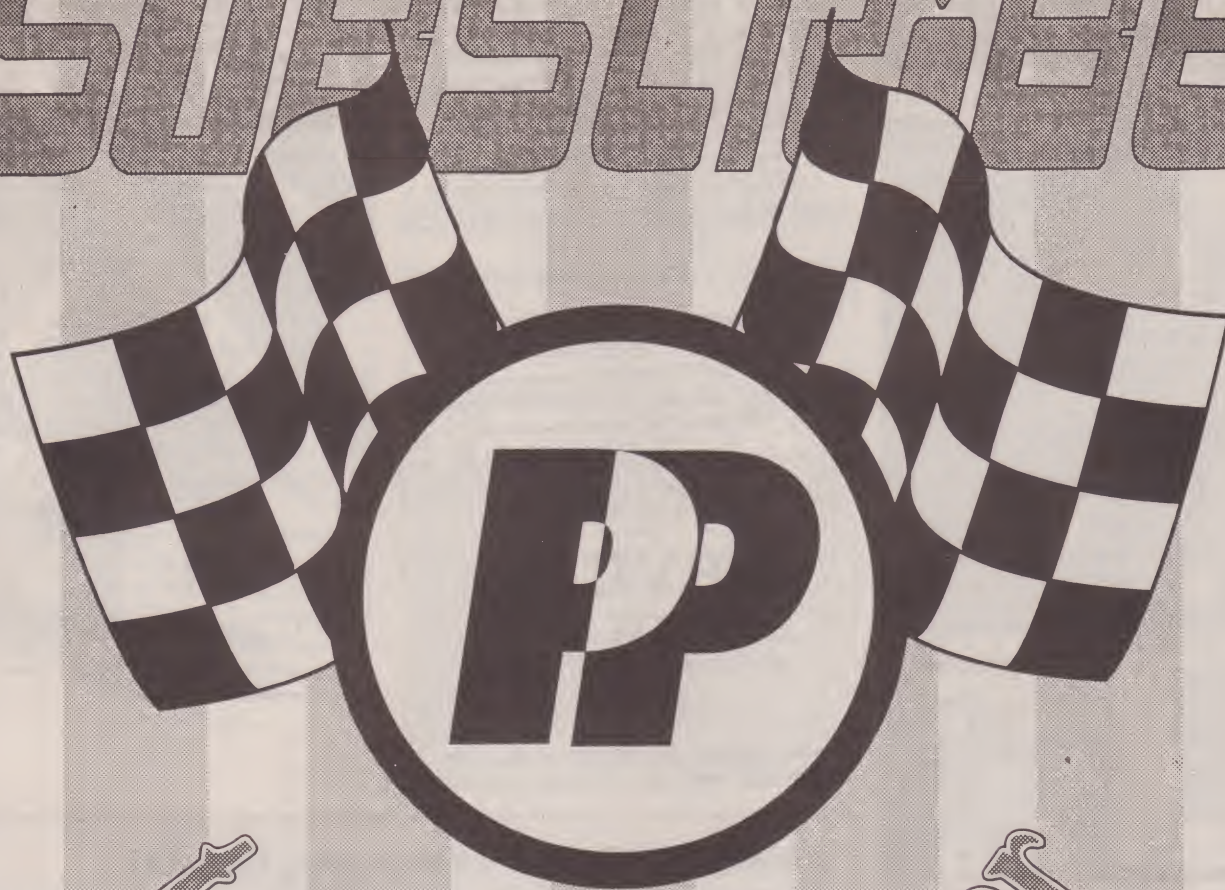
(Snuffy Smile, 4-24-4-302 Daizawa, Setagaya-Ku, Tokyo 155, Japan. FAX: 03(3424)7901)

V/A-Youth Power Comp 7"

As far as I can tell, this comp doesn't have a name, so I just gave it one. Nya Nya! All these bands play that loud/quiet sing/scream combo that all the kids are hep on nowadays. They all pull it off pretty well too. The standout is Council of Five Nations, who go just about full-on ass crazy during their song. The most annoying is Know Nothing, who are trying too damn hard. Also on the wax is Thinner and In Vain. (DS)

(Youth Power Records PO Box 3923 Manchester, CT 06045-3923)

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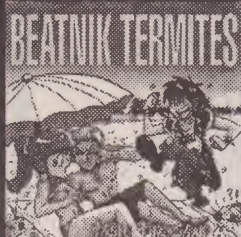
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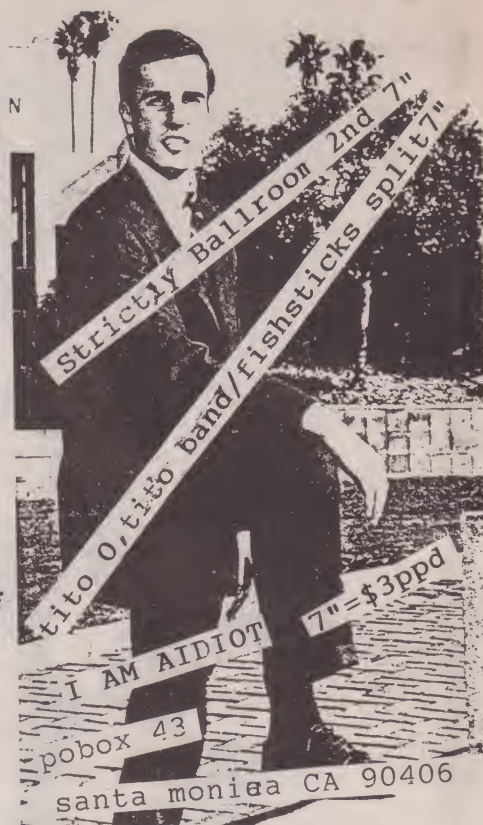
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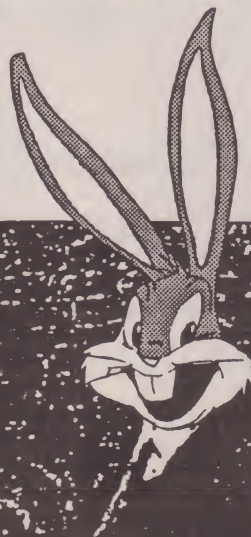
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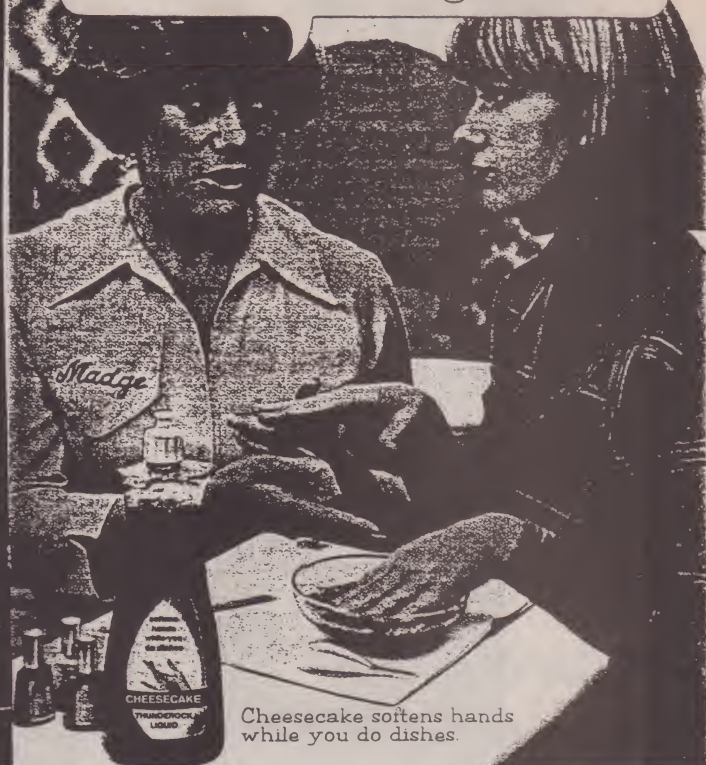
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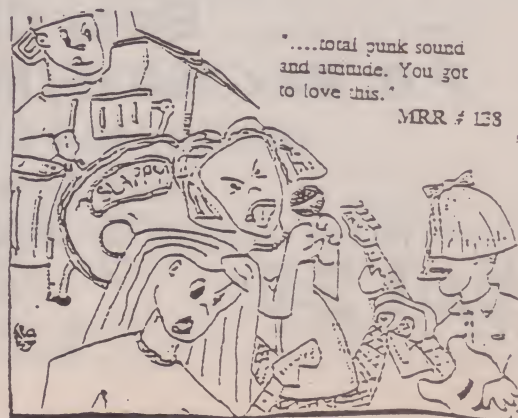
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Check out this review MRR gave the Bristles LP!



THE BRISTLES- "Last Year's Youth" LP

So, I walk into Maximum and see this in my review bin. I get so excited that I have to sprint to the bathroom and plant myself on the porcelain throne where I spend the next ten minutes. This band f**kin' rules! Their singles rock, their cuts on all the compilations I've heard rock and this rocks. No future, snotty ass punk that'll make you want to pogo your life away, tell your teacher to f**k off and that your parents will hate. A classic. Thanks times a thousand for the extra copy.

review reprinted from-Maximum Rock n Roll #159

Another killer MRR review for 10-96!



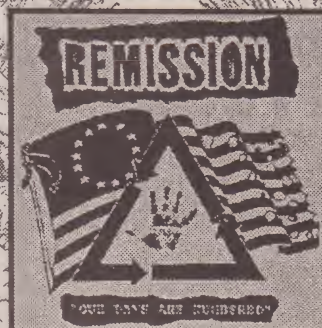
10-96- "No Retreat" LP

You drunk punk H/C knuckleheads have already heard of Beer City Records, right. They are constantly putting out fast-as-f**k buster-yer-butt punk and hardcore. This new contribution f**kin' smokes! A break-neck speed is achieved. Bottles are broken. Skaters are inverted. Good covers of songs by TOXIC REASONS, EXPLOITED, BLACK FLAG, and PETER AND THE TEST TUBE BABIES. Thirty-six brief n' brutal attacks. Included is a huge full color poster with a collage of band pictures and all the lyrics. Check out some of the meaningful lyrics in "Police Assisted Suicide" and "Child Abuse". Kinda refreshing when a band as punk and fast as this is so damn intelligent!

review reprinted from-Maximum Rock n Roll #159



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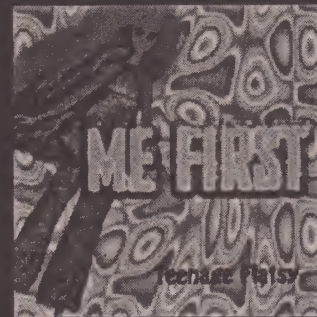
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Kings and Queens is
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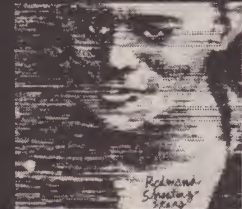
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Fanzine Reviews

Yeah, it may look like a shorter review section... Wait 'till next issue. It's gonna be freakin' huge!

This issue's reviewers:

Eric Action (EA), Kim Bae (KB), Brian Czarnik (BC), Scott MacDonald (SM), Jim Testa (JT), Bret Van Horn (BVH), Dan Sinker (DS),

the reviews with no initials are

Jim Connell's

59 Cents #10

Tits, beer, drugs and Malibu Shores. That is what you get and somehow the writers pull it off in a way that seems non-offensive and you know it is worth the read.

Also some typical band stuff and a longer informative article on Dioxin and Women's health (tampons, etc.) Send em some stamps. (EA)

(59 Cents, PO Box 19806 Seattle, WA 98109)

Adge #2

A nice-looking little skate and punk zine with the usual photos and interviews. Just one thing... the guy who does this lives in Singapore! Editor Alvin Ng lets you know that things in Singapore aren't all that different from life in the U.S.A. - he rants about the cops, raves about mailorder (it must be a godsend where he lives, where everything is an overpriced import,) interviews a local band, and reviews some records and zines (including a lot of titles from Malaysia and England you've probably never heard of.) It is a small world after all. (JT)

(\$2 ppd. U.S. - Blk 24, Telok Blangah, Crescent, 02-14, Singapore 090024)

All That-#8

This issue features NOFX, Texas is the Reason, Bouncing Souls and an interesting "tell all" interview with John Joseph, formerly of the Cro Mags. (BVH)

(P.O. Box 1520 Cooper Square Station, New York, NY 10276-1520)

Alley Cat #5

Wisconsin is a demented state with white trash running wild. But man does it make an interesting underground story book. This

guy Lee is telling us stories and they be worth your time to gander at. Does cheese make people strange or what? (BC)

(\$1.00ppd Lee R. P.O. Box 1421 Oshkosh, WI. 54902)

Ambivalent Obsessions #1

This comic zine starts off with a fairly innocuous if somewhat trippy story about a boy lost a sea, but the rest of the zine is filled with sexually explicit drawings featuring scantily clad women being violated by different animals and monsters. The title just about sums it up. (JT)

(\$3 or \$2.75 in stamps - PO Box 32762, Kansas City MO 64171)

Another Link #1

The postmark on this is 10/30/95, so I guess it's been floating around the PP universe for a while. I'd like to see what the (unnamed) author is up to these days. The zine is bizarre, in a good way. It's kind of like too short but if there was more there would be

too much. It is, unquestionably, unique. It has a table of contents, for one thing. Nothing in it is as it seems, either. Some quotes: "The mashed potatoes, peas, and especially the fresh-cut (important) collard and mustard greens all rock." Or how about "...our Harvard University deans come to teach us will not have you god damn bitch kidnapping us, sticking us with needles." See why this review is so confused? Somebody get this guy (girl?) to write an article for Punk Planet...

(PO Box 884, Plant City, FL 33566, 16pp half-size, free but send a stamp)

Basic Zero #3

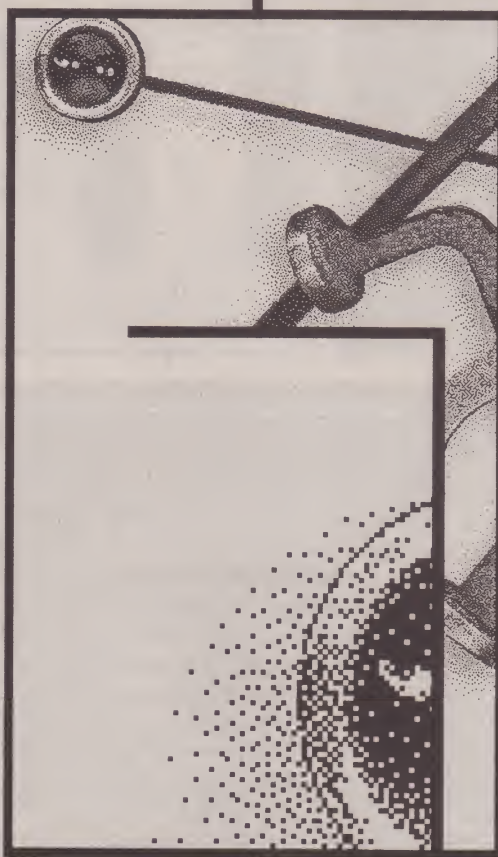
Bad rhyming poetry, reviews, most embarrassing moments (obviously invented) and a pretty interesting bit about getting kicked out of school for a Dead Kennedy's patch. This is the sort of thing that would be good floating around the halls of a high school in Kentucky and pissing off the administration, but not the kind of thing that anybody should go out of their way to mailorder. (SM)

(700 Lenore Rd., Cox's Creek, KY 40013 USA)

Bug #6

This has lots and lots of band pictures which are nice. It's a kind of Northwest-oriented zine with a fun and friendly feel to it. I liked it. Lots of handwritten stuff that you can actually read and which is pretty interesting. However, this is a tough one to review because it's better than 90% of the stuff out there, and it makes putting together a good zine look easy (which it's not), but there's nothing here that hasn't been done lots of times before. Which, maybe, isn't a bad thing.

(PO Box 534, Boise, ID 83701, 44pp half-size, 50 cents plus a couple stamps would be nice)



Canvas/Thumb split

Wow, Canvas is a really good zine! It follows the standard 1/2 size zine format (interviews, reviews, personal writing), but manages to pull it off with intelligence & good writing! Very impressive. Thumb was a similar zine, but just not as good. Combined in the two are interviews with Braid, Action Patrol, our own Bob Conrad, skater Ron Allen, The Vandals, & The Bouncing Souls.
(I can't find a goddamn address)

Censor This #5

This zine is one of those heavy-ass full page dingys. Kinda like Change zine meets the Probe. Meaning...it is very good. Loads of interviews with Vandals, Man or Astroman, Boris the Sprinkler, Zoinks and about a thousand more. Great lay outs and pictures make this a winner. "Bob" from the church of the sub-genius even has an ad in here. Nice ravings, reviews and all that kinda junk. Like Flipside and other California zines, it has a strong U.F.O. liking.
This is a good zine, but what do I know I couldn't even get the job at MRR. (BC)
(\$2.00ppd C.T. P.O. Box 5551, Pasadena, CA. 91117-0551)

Charred Remains #6

So this be the sex issue. It seems to be some answers from a sex survey. It is interesting. A little humor never hurts, especially regarding sex. There are other basic zine things in here too. It is also split issue with Duhhh fanzine. Both zines come out of England, and both deserve our filthy American money! BC.
(\$3.00ppd Charred Remains c/o Russell P.O. Box 43 Hull, HU1 1AA England)

Cherry Pop #4

This is a short review. 1.Very Girl 2.Very Personal 3.Very interesting and lastly 4. Very worth your time. Simple and stated.
(EA)
(Cherry Pop 1310 Milan Ave, Pasadena, CA 91030 @30 pages, \$1)

Clutch #5

A prose & poetry journal. I hate poetry and that's what this mostly is. However, it's kinda cool that they sent it into a punkzine for review. But that cover price shore is high! (DS)
(\$5 c/o Drill Press 554 Natoma St. San Francisco CA 94103)

Cool Beans #5

Another Cool Beans issue this time with a nice CD. This is the Texas issue with articles on Rhythm Pigs, Dicks, Big Boys plus more. If you have read his BBS or his zine you know how his style. The CD has great bands like J-Church, Down MF and stuff like Butthole Surfers, Dicks..... (EA).
(Cool Beans 3181 Mission #113, SF CA, 94110 Big Glossy and CD for \$6)

Dee Dee's Kids #7

A mainly-music zine with some funny bits. We have here interviews with Mr. T Experience, The Breakups and Bubble Boys, the obligatory review section, and some opinion bits on the Sex Pistols, gutter punks, 80's music, and why he doesn't like Riot Grrrl zines (which was pretty fucking stupid, by the way). The best part was the retrospective on the history of Motley Crue, following the band through their four stages of their glam metal career. Funny stuff. Oh, and in case you hadn't guessed, the editor likes the Ramones. A decent zine. (SM)
(PO Box 45411, Kansas City, MO 64171 USA \$1 + 1 stamp)

DeeDee's Kids #8

This is pretty decent. The brief writing pieces show some potential but are too short. The interviews (with The Loudmouths, the Nuclear Family, the Fiendz, and Propagandhi) are better than average (i.e. the questions are somewhat varied and interesting). There's a ton of Ramones references in here; one of the 2 Ramones articles, which was about a rap project that Dee Dee did was absolutely hilarious. (KB)
(\$1 + stamp US, \$3 elsewhere / PO Box 45411 / Kansas City, MO 64171)

Defecation #3

A nice lil' zine indeed. Kinda like a journal, kinda like has reviews, kinda like has stuff about Hong Kong, kinda cool! Get it cause it only be two American stamps. (BC)
(2 stamps Brendan Sheridan / Amcongen Hong Kong PSC 464 Box 30, FPO AP 96522 U.S.A.)

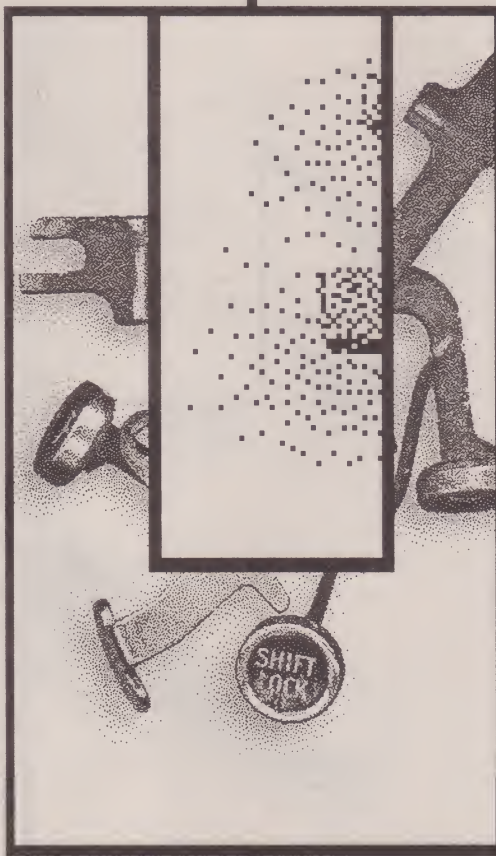
Dogprint #5 & #6

I can't be more thrilled that I got 2 issues of this excellent zine for review. The interviews that I read are some of the most insightful, revealing, and honest chats that I've ever seen. Even the one and two pagers were extremely well-done. (#5 ints: Shades Apart, Half Man, Backlash, BEP Records, Three

Mile Pilot, Standpoint; #6: Into Another, Integrity, John Joseph, Atlas Shrugged.) The photos are beautiful, the layouts clean, the reviews diverse, and the writing poetic. To those who are not into SxE stuff (I am not), do not be turned off by what seems to be a limited scope; this zine is inspirational. (KB)
(\$2 US, \$3 elsewhere / PO Box 84 / Suffern, NY 10901)

Dupa #5

This is one of those zines where the writer rambles on about whatever. Without any cohesive theme or subject matter, this zine leaves me feeling as though I've missed something. The



only way I'd recommend this is if you have an obsession with Journey (the 80's band). (SM)
(1333 east 8th St. Apt C, Tucson, AZ 85719 USA two stamps)

Ego-Death Visits White Boy Some More

Some drawings that kind of remind me of those ink-blot tests, a few kind of cryptic word things, all of it way too arty for my uncultured taste. This is the kind of thing that makes me think there must be a whole world out there that I'm just oblivious to: the people who get it. On the other hand maybe it's just pre-tentious crap.
(Chris Purcell, no address, 10pp really-tiny-size, no price)

Emphasis Too #1 (Spring '96)

A good standard zine out of eastern PA. A rant, a diary of a trip to some festival in Ohio, reviews, you get the picture. It's better-done than most zines of the type, it's just that there are so many of them these days. Then just about when my eyes started to glaze over there was this half page piece about the author's father passing away that just knocked me on my ass.
(c/o Tom Prestia, 303 8th St. Apt. A-2, Bridgeport, PA 19405, 16pp half-size, \$1 ppd.)

Enema #?

This was a pretty good read. Lots of cool and funny artwork is printed which I always enjoy. Interviews with The Gaia, The Varukers, Spazz, and the head of the Western Shoshone Defense Project. There's a very heavy local focus which is admirable. Edited by Pete Menchetti who should be commended for doing Sticker Guy! anyway. Definitely worth the price. Must write using choppy sentences (I'm referring to myself). KB
(756 / PO Box 204 / Reno, NV 89504)

Eventide #1

Hey, this is all right for a first issue. Interviews with Rain Still Falls, Guilt, Endeavor, Temperance, and Greensleep that are heavy on the information side (about band history, touring, and recordings), photos, pretty good reviews section, and some emo-ish writing that I didn't really care for. (KB)
(\$2 US, \$3 world / Toby Carroll / 225 Riveredge Rd. / Tinton Falls, NJ 07724)

Facecar #4

Your standard zine: writing, interviews, reviews. The interviews with Down By Law and the Dickies would probably be the only reasons to buy this, since the writing is pretty uninteresting. (SM)
(5 Echo place, Larkspur, CA 94939-1902 USA \$1 + stamps)

First Class Rank #5

This is a definite improvement over #3 which I reviewed in the last issue of PP. The interviews are a bit stunted and none of the writing is what I'd consider to be well-thought out or intellectually grounded but there were a few bits in here that I enjoyed like the coffee article. The interviews are with Spent Idols and The Suspects and the rest is personal writing. (KB)
(\$1 / no address but I'll print the one from #3: 212 Rodaline Ave. / Lewes, DE 19958)

Fizz #4, #5

Fizz is a super fun, super filled and a long, long read. I have been a fan of this one for a long time. It is a good chance that you can find this in any decent size town. Every issue is worth it I won't go into each issue specifically but there is always great interviews (the best, really). Fashion, drinks and no reviews to fill up their space. It is worth the \$2.95 if you don't mind a little mainstream to slip in like Archers of Loaf or bands like that. (EA)
(Fizz 1509 Queen Anne, Ave N 276, Seattle, WA 98109)

Flabby Arms #6, #7

Wow! It is about time that I find a zine that is fun and entertaining. They are short but Molly can make you laugh. They are 50 cents each but I would send her a dollar or two and ask for as many as she can give you. Lot of comics, stories and stuff as the cover says. I seriously laughed a lot reading these. Thanks Molly. (EA)
(Molly Brodak PO Box 82309 Rochester, MI 48308-2309)

Green With Envy #2

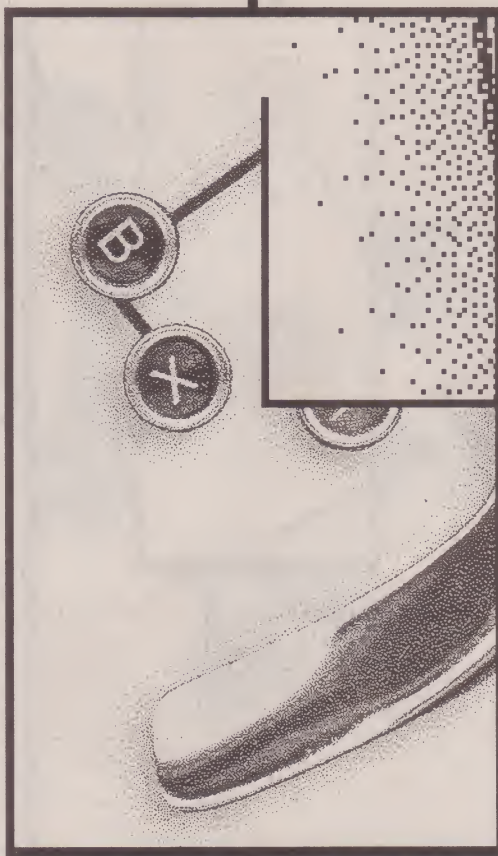
This is written by an angry, confused, feminist, bulimic 15 year old girl. It is page after page of stream-of-consciousness honesty. It's painful to read sometimes, but compelling and intense and sad and fucked up, and frighteningly familiar and normal at the same time. She seems to be unusually sensitive and aware, seeing and feeling and thinking about things that go by most people without

a ripple. On the other hand at 15 everything is filled with depth and intensity and meaning for many of us, and I'll bet that in ten years a lot of this intensity will just seem amusing to her when she looks back. I feel funny doing this review, since as an older male I'm kind of the enemy in her eyes, but I got assigned it and I tried to be fair and honest.

(Lorie Pease, 5834 West Lane, Lake View, NY 14085, 32pp half-size, 2 stamps or trade)

I Know Who You Are-#1

Madeline does an intriguing little zine here and for a first issue, she appears to be off to a great start. This issue is titled "Women" and it meant to look at fifteen of the women in Madeline's life who have



influenced her in one way or another. This concept not only sounds cool, but carried over to paper very well, offering an insight into a stranger's life, thoughts and perceptions. Highly recommended. (BVH) (\$1 to: Madeline Oldham 170 Melrose Ave. E #403 Seattle, WA 98102)

Incrowd (patriotic Issue)

Paul does a good job in this here zine making every article interesting. The interview with Napalm Death is great. also inside are reasons why Elvis is better than the Beatles. Plus lots of zine stuff that you would expect to see. But in this zine the stuff is good. And I thought Berkeley was drained of its goods. Silly me! (BC) (\$1.00ppd Incrowd #14 P.O. Box 14088 Berkeley, CA. 94712)

Innovative Plagiarism #7

Editor Dave Liberation proclaims this the last issue of his zine, although he will continue to run his record label (Liberation Records) and plans to start a new zine called Big Bang. Anyway, this issue includes an O.C. scene report (that can be summed up in two words: "O.C. sucks,") and a number of rants by different columnists with themes like "reality sucks" and "punk sucks." The interviews are much stronger - Doc Strange (of Dr. Strange Records) and 88 Fingers Louie - and there are several pages of movie and record reviews. (JT) (\$2 - 6633 Paseo Del Norte, Anaheim CA 92807)

Inside Front #8 w/CD

This comes with a 20 track CD comp with bands like OLC, Brothers Keeper, Abhinada, and Atlas Shrugged. Unfortunately, I can't comment on it because I didn't receive it. The premise of 'Inside Front' is to be a "Journal of Hardcore Music & Culture" (that's what it says on the front) and it does a pretty good job of it. Informative interviews with 25 TaLife and Gehenna, lots of columns, very in-depth reviews, and well-written articles about consumerism and the media's effect on women's issues. Everything is very well done. (KB) (\$4 US, \$6 world / Inland Empire Productions / 2695 Rangewood Dr. / Atlanta, GA 30345)

Micromag #1

A really cool, really little, mostly music zine. Neat graphics, a cool cartoon, nice layout, reviews, and some other tidbits. Interviews with Gas Huffer, Odd Numbers, Bottom Feeders, Johnny Polonsky, and The Candy Snatchers. Nice. (SM) (PO Box 442337, Lawrence, KS 66044 USA stamps?)

Mind Toylette #65

Crammed with shrunken typewriter text and hand-scribbled drawings, this zine looks like a hastily thrown-together and cheaply photo-

copied piece of crap, but the writing is oddly compelling. Lots of it is just rants and off-the-cuff observations on things in the lives of the students who put this out. Even the record reviews read like short bursts of enthusiastic mind-spew. Just the thing to kill some time next time you're into your sixth cup of java and pulling an all-nighter. (JT)

(2 stamps - Joe Kr, PO Box 6132, Long Island City NY 11106)

Motion Sickness-#1

These days, an impressive feat is laying out a magazine like Motion Sickness without the aid of a computer-something which Gary Phillips has managed to do quite well. This issue features Agent Orange, Anti-Flag, Hagfish, Pegboy, Propagandhi and much more. Future issues are anxiously awaited. (BVH) (\$1.50 PPD to: 6221 Delmar Blvd. Apt 202 Rear, St. Louis. MO 63130)

Pasadamnation

Usually, I am no great fan of zine poetry, but this chapbook of poems by Edward Dawson should not be tossed aside lightly. It should be hurled across the room with great force. (JT) (J. Burton Group, no address provided.)

Pepito's Folder #6,

Pepito travels the US and you can read all about it. Do you want to? At least he's spelling words the way they're supposed to be spelled now. Also, it would appear that Veruca Salt is on his shit list now. What happened? Yep... (DS) (c/o Kevin Rice 1630 North 1st Ave Apt #1 Melrose Park IL 60160)

Prozach

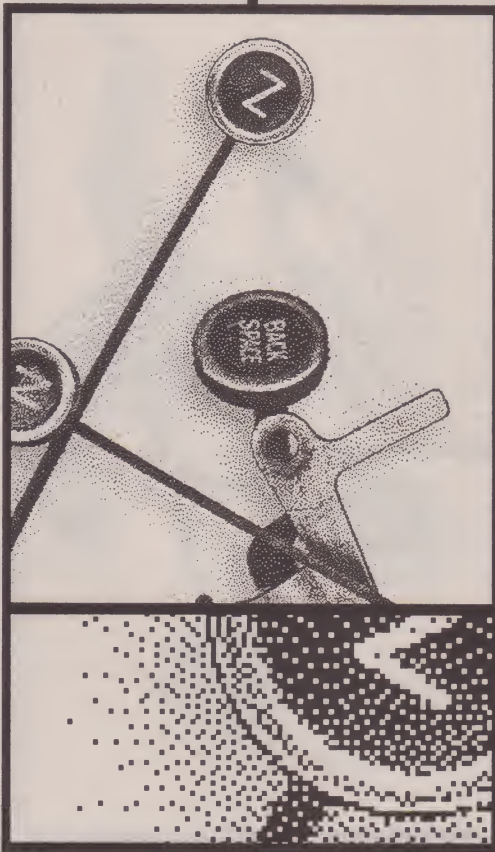
Would you send 4 bucks for zine with a crayon-scribbled cover that looks like a 1st grader's refrigerator art and a lot of pages xeroxed out of a looseleaf notebook? Well, I wouldn't either, but sometimes you can't judge a zine by its cover.

There's a lot to read here, mostly free verse poetry and spacey meditations on rude collisions with life, class notes, short rants, up to and including a transcript of the editor's psychological evaluation by a child psychiatrist. A personal zine that's almost too personal. (JT)

(\$4 ppd. - 364 N. Seminary, Downs IL 61736)

Pulse #1

More of the same, yeah yeah yeah, more of the same. Interviews (George Tabb, Mushuganas, more), rants, reviews. More of the same, yeah yeah yeah! (DS) (\$1.00 2412 Slayback St. Urbana IL 61801)



Rapid Fire Magazine-#14

The motorcycles and punk magazine is back, this time with less band press photos and more writings about motorcycle trips and live shows. (BVH)

(\$2 PPD to: RD#1 Box 3370 Starksboro, VT 0547-9701)

Restaurant Fuel #1

Wow, even as an issue one, this is pretty impressive. It's also pretty damn hard to describe. It's about breaking stereotypes, I guess. But it's way better than that. It's mostly interviews, and the ones with bands (Edsel) and labels (Magic Eye Records) are fairly rote, there are interviews with people, just normal people, that are fantastic! Most impressive is an interview with one of the authors childhood best friends who has become a Jesus Freak. The interview is not condescending at all (as I expected it to be) and really does open up a world I had no idea existed.

I can't wait to see issue #2!

(\$3 PO Box 803, Greenbelt MD, 20768-0803)

Roctoher-#13

An interesting combination of music and comics with a varies content. Tons of underground comics grace the pages while music and some interesting articles creep in from time to time. (BVH)

(\$2 to: 1507 E 53rd St. #617 Chicago, IL 60615)

Rocktober #16

Rocktober is, simply put, a masterpiece. Definitely one of the best zines being produced right now, and definitely in the running for one of the best zines produced ever. This issue's feature is on Monkey Rock N Roll and is absolutely incredible, the amount of research that went into finding these simian-themed bands is staggering. Plus comics, a masked-rock n roll update, reviews and much, much more. (DS)

(\$3 1507 E. 53rd #617 Chicago, IL 60615)

Rotten Crabapple #3

This zine kind of reminds me of how GWAR would have turned out if they hadn't gone to college. It is nominally an Oil/Punk/Ska zine, and does have a serious side with an interview with Blanks 77, a book excerpt about SHARPs, etc. But the meat of it lies in its charming articles on such topics as the disadvantages of weed wacking when one has a five foot three inch penis, and beer reviews where a rave consists of "you'll find yourself face down in your own vomit before long." There's something here to offend even the most open-minded reader.

However, if diarrhea is your cup of tea, this is not a zine to miss.

(c/o J. Weinrich, PO Box 580, Buffalo, NY 14213, 24pp half-size, 50 cents)

The Rulers #6

A journal of sorts... a few days in the life of the zine editor, plus a day from each of seven other people. It sounds kind of dull and in some ways it is; there's a lot of boring routine and detail. But if you take the time to read the whole thing, it leaves you thinking about lots of stuff. It was an interesting concept for a zine, and it worked.

(SA MOB, PO Box 1931, Erie, PA 16507, 16pp half-size, \$1 ppd.)

Screed #3, #4

This is a free local music paper for the Cincinnati area, but unlike most such efforts it appears to be DIY, and well-done. Contains band reviews, articles about hearing loss, good local radio, and DIY TV, comics, recipes, reviews, plus there's a pizza coupon if you're ever in town. Mostly of interest to locals, but if you're involved in a local music zine of your own you'll find some inspiration here.

(c/o Terry Burke, 3100 Markbreit Ave. #2, Cincinnati, OH 45209, 16pp/24pp full size, \$1 ppd.)

Shake! #1

Well, this here zine comes to us from the Rocco empire. They have been putting out punk records/ zines for quit some time now, and they have always put out good product. Shake! is the punk G.Q. It has your basics, int. with a band (Jawbreaker), reviews, int. with an author (Robert Crumb), and loads of cartoons and interesting articles. But what sets this zine apart is class baby, class! The full glossy look works with the cover and centerfold of Hugh Hefner. This zine is going to turn into something wonderful, so get the intro issue now! p.s. Its got nudes! (BC)

(\$3.50ppd, Shake Magazine P.O. Box 14781, Chicago, IL 60614-0781)

Skeeter #1

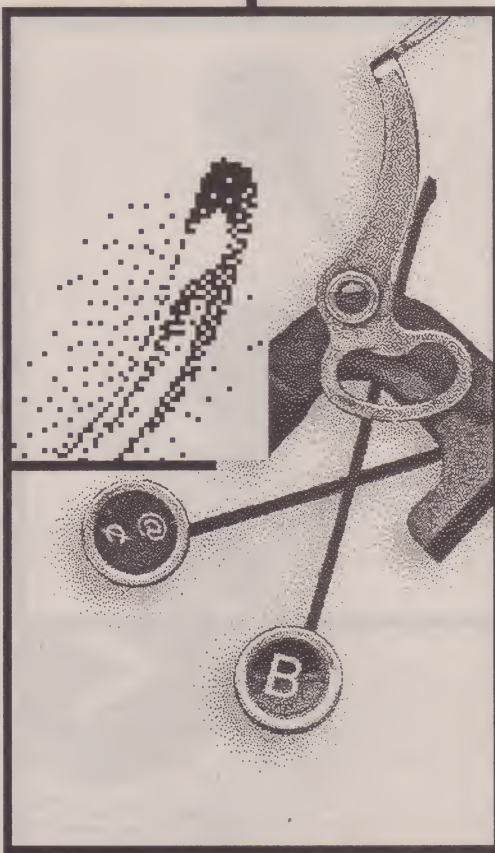
A well-done version of your standard zine. Random reviews, a Rev. Norb contribution, various lists and quizzes and such. Very much written from a high school girl point of view. Samples: "My Humungous Obsession With Michael Jackson", "Moshing and Boy Pits". You get the idea.

(c/o Clare Pepper, RR #1, Douglas, ON K0J 1S0, Canada, 28pp half-size, \$1 ppd.)

Slamdek A to Z, Book

This is the illustrated history of Louisville's Slamdeck Record Company. Most famous for their Endpoint releases the history of this label is an interesting read. The author is more or less creating a document of what was done over eight and a half years. Not only do you get the story on the label with a look at each of the releases Scott did but stories on their girls filed hockey team and more. It also comes with a CD highlighting some of their releases. If you own stuff from Slamdeck then you will dig this book. (EA)

(Initial Records, PO Box 251145 West Bloomfield, MI 48325 with CD, \$12.95)



Smashing Things Up #2

No this isn't a skinhead documentary, it is the newest zine from the Illinois region. Inside it contains a Slapstick interview. This band has to be the hottest ska band in the land. Rob does a little of everything in here (reviews, fiction, columns, etc...) It is a short read and doesn't take much time out of your busy day. good job Rob. (BC) (\$1.50ppd. S.T.U. P.O. Box 492, Hudson, IL. 61748)

Son of Skam #5 & #6

Mostly ska-focused zine done by people obsessed with cereal. Short interviews with Out of Order and The Independents (#5) and Royal Crowns, Johnny Too Bad and the Strikeouts, and Mulligan Stu (#6). "Tales from the Mop Bucket", the section in each issue with a hilarious (and sick) true story in it is definitely my favorite part. I say nix the interviews, stick with the writing and develop it a little more. (KB) (\$1 / PO Box 781 / Granby, CT 06035)

Spank Vol. 2, Issue 17

Interviews with Guilt, Motards and more. This zine is really more or less a lot of reviews, lots and lots of reviews. My opinion don't bother buying it. The interviews are worth finding a copy to read though. C'mon guys more interviews and writing and less reviewing and this would be a good zine. (EA) (Spank, \$2 no address)

Speed Bump #8

The editor of this zine is snotty, obnoxious, and rude. There isn't a whole lot of content in this cut 'n' paster but what's there is pretty funny. I can't say her rants are in any way lucid or intelligent but it's still thigh-slapping entertainment reading her rip on everyone. KB (2 stamps / 408 Spruce St. Apt. #1 / Philadelphia, PA 19106)

Spaghetti Dinner and Dancing #1

So I was eating some slop at the local Chinese takeout and checking out this zine, and all the Chinese workers and their kids were eating at the next table. I'm reading this long article entitled "booger poems" and every time I get to a good part I crack up and rice is flying and I've got tears running down my cheeks from laughing so much, and all these Chinese people are staring and I could tell they wanted so bad to ask what was so funny. But there are these, um, cultural differences. Not many people can write literate, mature, downright captivating prose about boogers. Perhaps you've never had the pleasure; or worse, never even imagined that such pleasure could be obtained, from as mundane a source as mucus. If so, this zine will open your eyes to a world beyond your wildest imaginings. There's other stuff too. I think it's wonderful. (Randy, 1903 S 4th W, Missoula, MT 59801, 30pp half-size, \$1 ppd.)

Spaghetti Dinner and Dancing #2

Some opinion columns, some crappy cartoons, a couple short interviews, some stories, some reviews and some pictures. Some stuff was interesting, most stuff wasn't; all-around this is just your average, nothing special zine. (SM) (1903 S 4th W, Missoula, MT 59801 USA \$1 or trade)

Under the Volcano #28

As always, Under the Volcano serves up its regular helping of column, interviews (The Riverdales, Victory Records, & much more), and reviews. Quality is, as always, quite high. (DS) (\$2 PO Box 236 Nesconset NY 11767)

What's Going On In My Pants? #3

A thick zine with interviews with Voodoo Glow Skulls, Jawbreaker, Lifetime, Mickey and the Big Mouths, Chris Dodge, John Cougar Concentration Camp, Sicko, and 86'd. Aside from

that and this zine's really great name, the rest of it is just pretty dumb. But if you like those bands, this is a lotta zine for \$1. (SM) (C.J., 488 Green Bay Rd., Highland Park, IL 60035 USA \$1)

Xanadu #3

Hmmmm.... It starts out good, with an odd alien/conspiracy theme that doesn't get drawn out to its logical extremes, then it gets nicely involved for a few pages on spotlighting different B-films. But then it just becomes a normal fanzine with music & zine reviews, band interviews (Jawbox, I Farm, and Pumpnickel), and live show reviews. Cut the pork, go with what you know. (DS) (\$1.50 3634 N. 21 Ave. Arlington VA 22207)

Zimms#9

Paul the man Degen returns with his latest and biggest issue of Zimms. He gets to chat with Zoinks, Doc Hopper, Good Riddance, Less Than Jake, Invalids and the Swinging Utters among others. He throws

in a good portion of stupidity and silly clippings. Paul is an expert and his readings should be read. (BC) (\$1.50ppd Paul Degen 1350 Sherwood rd. Highland Park, IL. 60035-2834)

Zincological Xenophobia #0

There were a few isolated lines that I really got a kick out of (like "Men, get a clue, WOMEN ARE SUPERIOR!!!!" and "I'm not fat, I'm well covered!") but most of this is typical cut & paste 1st issue and juvenile type of stuff. A sort of stiff interview with Jason Schreurs (SCHtuff...) and stories, funny cutesy tidbits, etc.. (KB) (stamps or \$1 / 4242 Fernwood Ave. / Powell River B.C. V8A 3K8)



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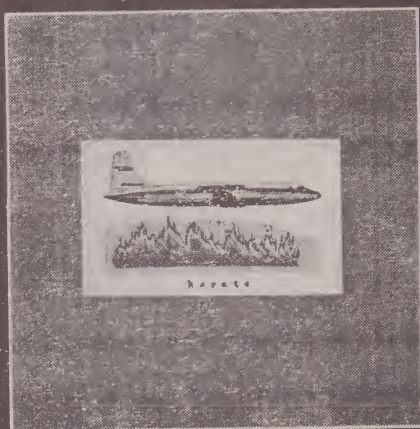


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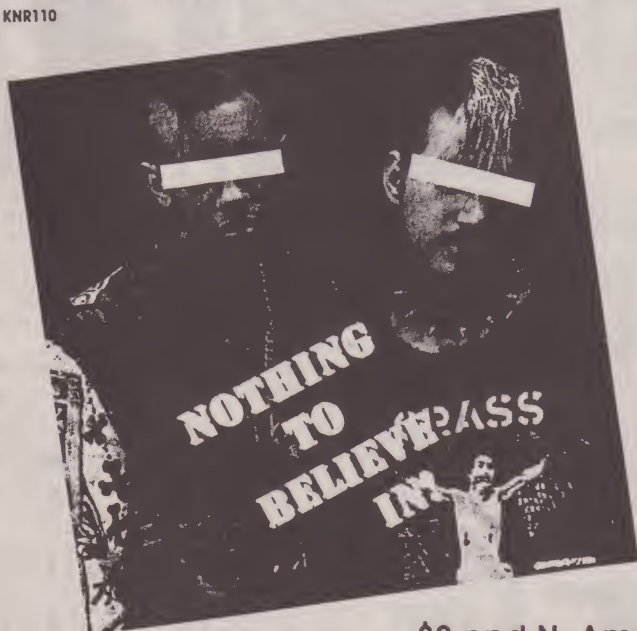
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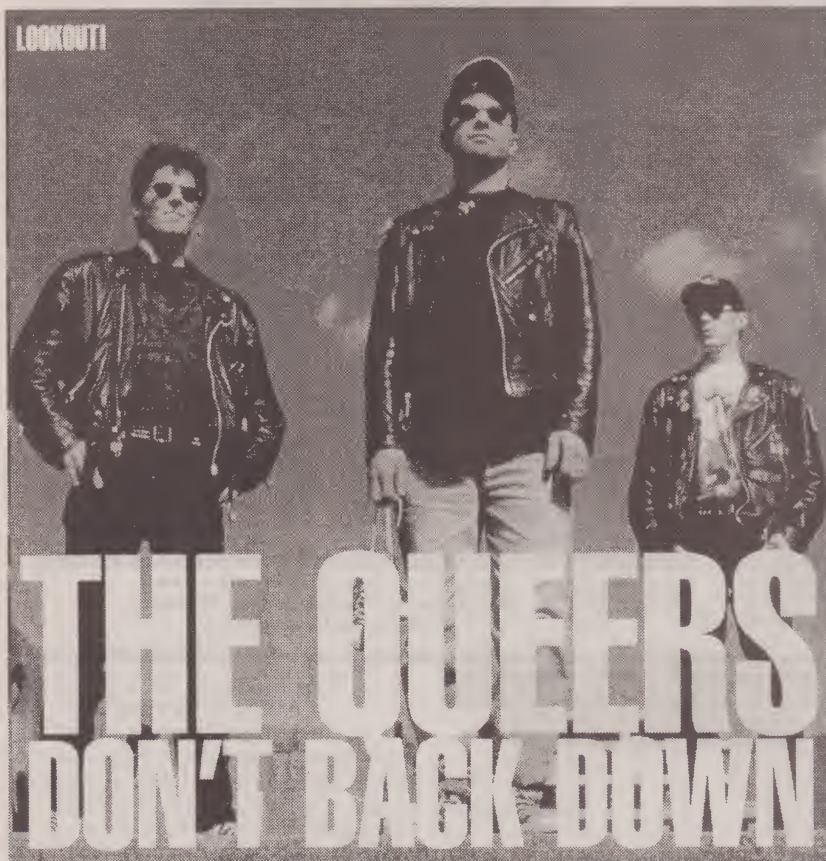
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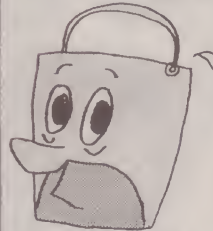
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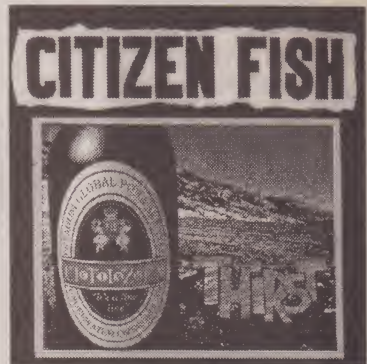
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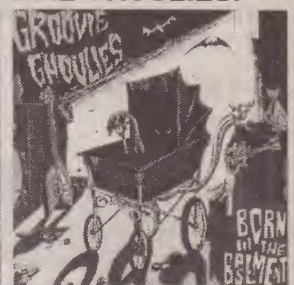
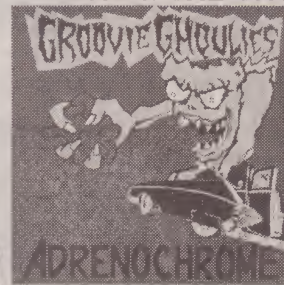
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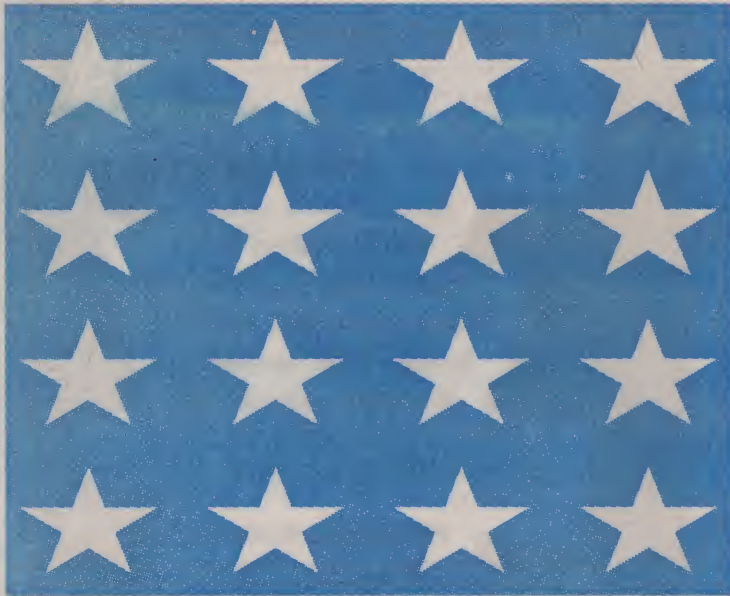
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To:



The state of young people in America is in many ways bleaker than in 1968. America has, since the '80s, more children in poverty than any other industrialized country in the world. We

also have the highest infant mortality rate. It gets worse when you grow up, because there has been a steady decline in federal funds for public schools, a slashing of federal and state college education though subsidized loans and school grants. And with our economy shifting principally from manufacturing to service, most young Americans are stuck with low wage, low benefit jobs without any prospects of vertical socio-economic movement. All the ingredients for a social rupture in the form of protests, demonstrations, and activism are there. But the masses aren't massing, which in itself is another sign of the bleakness most young people feel about things changing.